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# DR. WAINWRIGHT'S PATIENT.

LONDON:
ROBSON AND SONS, PRINTERS, PANCRAS ROAD, N.W.

# DR. WAINWRIGHT'S PATIENT.

## A Novel.

BY

EDMUND YATES,

AUTHOR OF

"BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," "BROKEN TO HARNESS," ETC.

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?"

SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193 PICCADILLY.

1871.

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250. u 306.

TO

JOHN STRANGE BAKER,

IN REMEMBRANCE

OF

TWENTY YEARS' FRIENDSHIP.

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# DR. WAINWRIGHT'S PATIENT.

## CHAPTER I.

### CAPTAIN DERINZY'S RETREAT.

BEACHBOROUGH, where, in obedience to the strident voice of the railway porter—voice combining the hardness of the Dorset with the drawl of the Devon dialect—you, if you be so disposed, "Change for Sandington Cove and Waverley," is a very different place from what it was even ten years ago. To be sure the sea is there, and the beach, and the fishing-luggers with the red sails; but in everything else what changes! Now there is, as has been said, a railway-station, a forlorn little oasis of white planking in a desert of sandy heath, inhabited by a clerk—a London young

man, who "went too fast" in the metropolis, and has been relegated to Beachborough as a good healthy place where there is no chance of temptation—and a porter, a native of the place, a muscular person great at wrestling, who is always inviting the male passers-by of his acquaintance to "come on," and supplying them on their doing so, with a very ugly throw known as a "back-fall." There are not many passers-by, for the newly-formed road leads to nowhere in particular, and those who tramp through its winter slush, or struggle through its summer dust, are generally either tradesmen of the place anxious about over-due parcels, or servants, sent to make inquiries about the trains, from some of the houses on the Esplanade.

The Esplanade! Heavens, if old Miss Gollop, who lived at the Baths, and who used to supply very hot water and very damp towels, and the greatest number of draughts ever known to be got together into one small room, to the half-dozen county families to whom Beachborough was then known as a watering-place—if old Miss

Gollop could revisit the glimpses of the moon and by its light look upon the Esplanade, it would, I am certain, be impossible for that worthy old lady to recognise it as Mussared's Meadow, where she picked cowslips and sucked sorrel when she was a girl, and which was utterly untainted by the merest suspicion of brick and mortar when she died twenty years ago. She would not recognise it any more than in the Dingo Arms—that great white-faced establishment, with its suites of apartments, its coffee-room, wine-office, private bar, and great range of stabling, patronised by, and in its *sanctum sanctorum* bearing an heraldic emblazonment of the arms of, Sir Hercules Dingo Dingo, Bart., bloody hand, four-quartered shield and all—she would have recognised the Hoy, a tiny "public" where they used to sell the hardest beer and the most stomach-ache-provoking cider, and which in her day was the best tavern in the village. The white-faced terrace has sprung up in Mussared's Meadow; the Esplanade in front of it is a sea-wall and a delightful promenade for the Misses Gimp's young ladies, who are the

admiration of Dingo-terrace, and who have deadly rivals in Madame de Flahault's *demoiselles*, whose piano-playing is at once the delight and the curse of Powler-square; the cliffs, once so gaunt and barren and forlorn, are dotted over with cottages and villakins, all green porch and plate-glass windows; the old barn-like church has had a fresh tower put on to him, and a fresh minister—one with his ecclesiastical millinery of the newest cut, and up to the latest thing in genuflexions—put into him; there is a Roman-catholic chapel close to the old Wesleyan meeting-house; and they have modernised and spoiled the picturesque tower where Captain Derinzy wore away a portion of his days. Great improvements, no doubt. Pavement and gas, and two policemen, and a railway, and a ritualistic incumbent, and shops with plate-glass windows, where you can get Holloway's pills and Horniman's teas, and all the things without which no gentleman's table is complete. But the events of my story happened ten years ago, when the inhabitants of Beachborough — shopkeepers, fisher-people, villagers,

and lace-makers—were like one family, and loved and hated and reviled and back-bit each other as the members of one family only can.

We shall get a little insight into the village politics if we drop in for a few minutes at Mrs. Powler's long one-storied, thatched-roofed cottage, standing by itself in the middle of the little High-street. Mrs. Powler is a rich and childless old widow, Powler deceased having done a little in the vending of home-manufactured lace, and a great deal in the importing, duty-free, of French lace and brandy. It was Powler's run when Bill Gollop, the black sheep of the Gollop family, was shot by the revenue-officer down by Wastewater Hole, a matter which Powler is scarcely thought to have compromised by giving a new organ to Bedminster church. However, he has been dead some years, and his widow is very rich and tolerably hospitable; and her little thatched cottage—she never lived in any other house—is the centre and focus of Beachborough gossip.

It is just about Mrs. Powler's supper-time, which is very early in the summer, and she has

guests to supper. There is no linen in all Beachborough so white as Mrs. Powler's, no such real silver plate, no such good china or glass. The Beachborough glass generally consists of fat thick goblets on one stump-leg, or dumpy heavy wine-glasses with a pattern known as "the pretty" half-way up their middle, which, like the decanters, are heavy and squat, and require a strong wrist to lift them. But Mrs. Powler had thin, blown delicate glasses, and elegant goblets with curling snakes for their handles, and drinking-cups in amber and green colours, all of which were understood to have come from "abroad," and were prized by her and respected by her neighbours accordingly. There never was a bad lobster known in Beachborough; and it is probable that Mrs. Powler's were no better than her neighbour's, but she certainly had a wondrous knack of showing them off to the best advantage, setting-off the milk-white of the inside and the deep-red of the shell with layers of crisp curling parsley, as a modern belle sets off her complexion with artfully-arranged bits of tulle and blonde.

Nor was her boiled beef to be matched within ten miles round. "I du 'low that other passons' biled beef to Mrs. Powler's is sallt as brine and soft as butter," Mrs. Jupp would confess; and Mrs. Jupp was a notable housewife, and what the vulgar call "nuts" on her own cooking. There is a splendid proof of it on the table now, cold and firm and solid. Mr. Jupp has just helped himself to a slice, and it is his muttered praise that has called forth the tribute of general admiration from his better-half. Mr. Hallibut, the fish-factor and lace-dealer from Bedminster, is still occupied with the lobster; for he has a ten-mile drive home before him, and any fear of indigestion he laughs to scorn, knowing how he can "settle" that demon with two or three raw "nips" and one or two steaming tumblers of some of that famous brandy which the deceased Powler imported duty-free from abroad, and a bottle of which is always to be found for special friends in the old oak *armoire*, which stands under the Lord's-Prayer sampler which Mrs. Powler worked when she was a little girl.

Mrs. Powler is in the place of honour opposite the window. A little woman, with a dark-skinned, deeply-lined face, and small sparkling black eyes, the fire in which remains undimmed by the seventy years through which they have looked upon the world, though their sight is somewhat failing. She wears a fierce black front, and a closely-fitting white-lace cap over it, and an open raspberry-tart-like miniature of her deceased lord —a rather black and steelly-looking daguerreotype—gleams on her chest. Mrs. Powler likes her drinks, as she does not scruple to confess, and has been sipping from a small silver tankard of cider.

"Who was that just went passt the windor, Jupp?" she said, after a short period of tankard abstraction. "My eyes isn't what they was, and I du 'low I couldn't see, though I'm settin' right oppo-site like."

"Heart alive!" struck in Mrs. Jupp, after a moment's silence, and seeing it was perfectly impossible her better-half could sufficiently masticate the piece of cold beef on which he was en-

gaged in anything like time for a reply—"heart alive, to hear you talk of your eyes, Mrs. Powler! Why, there's many a young gal would give anythin' for such a pair in her head, either for show or for use, either!"

"I should think so," said Mr. Jupp, who had by this time cleared his mouth and moistened his palate with the contents of the cider-tankard—"I should think so!" and Mr. Jupp, who was of a convivial turn, began to troll, "Eyes black—as sloes, and—bo-o-oo-som rounded—"

"Mr. Jupp," interrupted Mrs. Jupp, a tall, thin, horse-faced woman, with projecting buck-teeth, and three little sausage curls of iron-gray hair flattened down on either side her forehead, "reck'lect where you are, if you please, and keep your ditties to yourself."

"Well, niver mind my eyes," said Mrs. Powler; she desired to make peace, but she was a rich woman and in her own house, and consequently spoke in a dictatorial way—"niver mind my eyes, nor anything else for the matter of that, but tell who it was that went passt."

"It was the Captain, my dear madam, the Captain," replied Mr. Jupp, freshly attacking the cold beef, and consoling himself for his snubbing with his supper. "You had no great loss in not seeing him, ma'am: it was only the Captain."

"What! Prinsy, Drinsy, what's his name?" said Mr. Hallibut, taking a clean plate, and delicately clearing his lips and fingers from lobster-remains on the corner of the tablecloth. "I'll trouble you, Jupp!—Is he still here?"

"His name's Derinzy, Mr. Hollybut," said Mrs. Jupp. "De-rin-zy; it's a French name." Mrs. Jupp had been a lady's-maid once on a time, and prided herself on her manners and education.

"And mine's Hallibut, and not Hollybut, Mrs. Jupp," said the fish-factor jocosely; "and I'll trouble J-u double p—which I take it is an English name—for some of the inside fat—next the marrer-bone there!"

"Dear heart!" interrupted Mrs. Powler, feeling her position as hostess and richest of the company was being made scarcely sufficient of;

"how you do jangle, all of you! Not but what," added the old lady with singular inconsequence —"not but what I'm no scholard, and don't see the use of French names, while English is good enough for me."

"Ah, but some things is better French, as you and I, and one or two more of us could tell," said jocose Mr. Hallibut, feeling it was time for a "nip," and availing himself of the turn in the conversation to point with his elbow to the cellaret, where the special brandy was kept.

"Well, help yourself, and put the bottle on the table," said the old lady, somewhat mollified. "Ah, that was among the spoils of the brave, in the good old times when men was men!" she added in a half-melancholy tone. She was accustomed to think and speak of her deceased husband as though he had been the boldest of buccaneers, the Captain Kyd of the Dorsetshire coast; whereas he, in his lifetime, was a worthy man in a Welsh wig, who never went to sea, or was present at the "running" of a keg.

"And so the Captain's still here," pursued

Hallibut; "living in the same house, and doing much the same as usual, I suppose?"

"Jist exactly the same," replied Mr. Jupp. "Wandering about the village, mollonchollly-like, and cussin' all creation."

"Mr. Jupp," broke in his better-half, "reck'-lect where you are *if* you please, and keep your profane swearin' to yourself."

"I wonder he don't go away," suggested Hallibut.

"He can't," said Mrs. Jupp solemnly.

"What! do you mean to say he's been running in debt here in Beachborough, or over in Bedminster?"

"He don't owe a brass farthing in either place," asserted Mrs. Powler; "if anybody ought to know, I ought;" and to do her justice she ought, for no one heard scandal sooner, or disseminated it more readily.

"Perhaps he hadn't the chance," said Mr. Jupp, stretching out his hand towards the tumbler.

"Mr. Jupp," said his wife, "what cause have

you to say that? Was you ever kept waiting for the money for the meal or malt account? Is the rent paid regular for the bit of pasture-land for Miss Annette's cow? Well, then, reck'lect where you are, if you please, and who you're speaking of."

"Well, but if he hates the place and cusses—I mean, does what Jupp said he did just now—what does he stop here for? Why don't he go away? He must have some reason."

"Of course he has, Mr. Hallibut," said Mrs. Jupp with an air of dignity.

"Got the name all right this time, Mrs. Jupp;—here's your health," said the jolly man, sipping his tumbler. "Well, what's the reason?"

"It's because of Miss Annette—she that we was speaking of just now."

"O, ah!" said Mr. Hallibut;—"she's his daughter, isn't she?"

"Niece," said Mrs. Jupp.

"O," said Mr. Hallibut doubtfully.

"You and I have seen the world, Hallibut," broke in Mr. Jupp, who had been paying his at-

tentions to the French brandy. "We've heard of nieces before—priests' nieces and such-like, who—"

"Mr. Jupp, *will* you reck'lect where you are, *if* you please?—What I was goin' to say when thus interrupted, Mr. Hallibut, was, that it's on account of his niece Miss Annette that Captain Derinzy remains in this place. She's a dreadful in-val-lid, is Miss Annette, and this Dorsetsheer air suits her better than any other part of England. As to her not bein' his niece—"

"La, la, du be quiet, Harriet!" interrupted Mrs. Powler, who saw that unless she asserted herself with a dash she would be quite forgotten; "this everlastin' click-clackin', I du 'low it goes threw my head like a hot knife threw a pat of fresh butter. Av' course Miss Netty's the Captain's niece; O, I don't mind you men—special you, Jupp, sittin' grinnin' there like the Mischief! I've lived long in the world, and in different sort of society from this; and I know what you mean fast enough, and I'm not one to pretend I don't, or to be squeamish about it."

This was a hard hit at Mrs. Jupp, who took it accordingly, and said,

"Well, but, Mrs. Powler, if Jupp were not brought up sudden, as it were—"

"Like enough, my dear, like enough; but when you're as old as I am, you'll find it's very hard to have to give up chat for fear of these kind of things, unless indeed there's young girls present, and then—well, of course!" said Mrs. Powler with a sigh. "But, Lord, you're all wrong about why Captain Derinzy stops at Beachborough."

"Do you know why it is, Mrs. Powler?" asked Mr. Hallibut, feigning intense interest, under cover of which he mixed himself a second tumbler of brandy-and-water.

"Well, I think I do," said the old lady.

"Tell us, by all means," said the fish-factor, looking at his hostess very hard, and dropping two lumps of sugar into his tumbler.

"Well, Harriet's right so far—there's no doubt about Miss Annette being the Captain's niece, at least, there's no question of her being his daughter, as you two owdacious men—and,

Jupp, you ought to know better, having been churchwarden, and your name in gold letters in front of the organ-loft, on account of the church being warmed by the hot pipes, which only made a steam and a smell, and no heat at all—as you two owdacious men hinted at. Lor' bless you, you don't know Mrs. Derinzy."

"That's what I tell 'em, Mrs. Powler," chorussed Mrs. Jupp; "they don't know the Captain's wife. Why, she's as proud as proud; and he daren't say his soul's his own, let alone introducin' anyone into the house that she didn't know all about or wish to have there."

"But still you don't know what makes them stay here," said Mrs. Powler, not at all influenced by her friend's partisanship, and determined to press her point home upon her audience.

"Well, if it isn't Miss Netty's illness, I don't," said Mrs. Jupp slowly, and with manifest reluctance at having to acknowledge herself beaten.

"Then I'll tell you," said the old lady triumphantly, smoothing her dress, looking slowly

round, and pausing before she spoke. "You know Mrs. Stothard?"

"Miss Annette's servant — yes," said Mrs. Jupp.

"Servant—pouf!" said Mrs. Powler, snapping her fingers, and thereby awaking Mr. Jupp, who had just dropped asleep, and was dreaming that he was in his mill, and dared not stretch out his legs for fear of getting them entangled in the machinery. "Who ever saw her do any servant's work; did you?"

"N-no; I can't say I ever did," replied Mrs. Jupp; "but then I have never been to the house."

"What does that matter?" asked the old lady rather illogically; "no one ever did. No one ever saw her do a stroke of servant's work in the house: mend clothes, wash linen, darn stockings, make beds—Dear heart alive! she's no servant."

"What is she then?" asked Mrs. Jupp eagerly.

"A poor relation!" hissed Mrs. Powler, bending over the table; "a poor relation, my dear, of

either his or hers, with something about her that prevents them shaking her off, and obliges them to keep her quiet."

"Do you think so—*really* think so?"

"I'm sure of it, my dear—certain sure."

"Lord, I remember," said Mrs. Jupp, with a sudden affectation of a mincing manner, and a lofty carriage of her head; "I remember once seeing something of the sort at the playhouse; but then the poor relation was a man, a man who always went about in a large cloak, and appeared in places where he was least expected and most unwelcome. It was in Covent Garden Theatre."

"Covent Garden Theatre," said Jupp, suddenly waking up. "I remember in the saloon—"

"Mr. Jupp, reck'lect where you are, *if* you please, and spare the company your reminiscences."

Here Mr. Hallibut, who, finding himself bored by the conversation about people of whom he knew nothing, had quietly betaken himself to drink, and had got through three tumblers of

brandy-and-water unobserved, remarked that as he had a long drive before him, he thought it was time for him to go, and after making his adieux departed to find the ostler at the Hoy, who had his rough old pony in charge. Mrs. Jupp put on her bonnet, and, after a word of promise to look in next morning and hear the remainder of her hostess's suspicions about Mrs. Stothard, roused up Mr. Jupp, who, balancing himself on frail and trembling legs, which he still believed to be endangered by the proximity of his mill's machinery, staggered out into the open air, where he was bid to reck'lect himself *if* he pleased, and to walk steadily, so that the coastguard then passing might not see he was drunk.

## CHAPTER II.

### A VISITOR EXPECTED.

It was indeed Captain Derinzy who had passed up the village street. It is needless to say that he had not heard anything of the comments which his appearance had evoked; but had he heard them, they would not have made the smallest difference to him. He was essentially a man of the world, and on persons of his class these things have very little effect. A is irretrievably involved; B has outwritten himself; C is much too intimate with Mrs. D; while D is ruining that wretched young E at *écarté*, so at least say Y and Z; but the earlier letters of the alphabet do not care much about it. They know that the world must be always full of shaves and *cancans*, and, like men versed in the great art of living, they know they must have their share of them, and know how to take them. Captain De-

rinzy passed up the village street without bestowing one single thought upon that street's inhabitants, or indeed upon anything or anybody within a hundred miles of Beachborough. He looked utterly incongruous to the place, and he felt utterly incongruous to it, and if he were recalled to the fact of its existence, or of his existence in it, by his accidentally slipping over one of the round knobbly stones which supplied the place of a footway, or having to step across one of the wide, self-made sluices which, coming from the cottages, discharged themselves into the common kennel, all he did was to wish it heartily at the devil; an aspiration which he uttered in good round rich tones, and without any heed to the feelings of such lookers-on as might be present.

See him now, as he steps off the knobbly pavement and strikes across the road, making for the greensward of the cliff, and unconsciously becoming bathed in a halo of sunset glory in his progress. A thin man, of fifty years of age, of middle height, with a neat, trim figure, and one of his legs rather lame, with a spare, sallow,

fleshless face, high cheek-boned, lantern-jawed, bright black eyes, straight nose, thin lips, not overshadowed, but outlined rather, by a very small crisp black moustache. His hair is blue-black in tint and wiry in substance, so much at least of it as can be seen under a rather heavy brown sombrero hat which he wears perched on one side of his head in rather a jaunty manner. His dress, a suit of some light-gray material, is well cut, and perfectly adapted for the man and the place; and his boots are excellently made, and fit his small natty feet to perfection. His ungloved hands are lithe and brown; in one of them he carries a crook-headed cane, with which—a noticeable peculiarity—he fences and makes passes at such posts and palings as he encounters on his way. That he was a gentleman born and bred you could have little doubt; little doubt from his carriage of himself, and an indescribable, unmistakable something, that he was, or had been, a military man; no doubt at all that he was entirely out of place in Beachborough, and that he was bored out of his existence.

Captain Derinzy passed the little road, which was ankle-deep in white sandy dust, save where the overflowings of the kennel had worked it into thick flaky mud, hopped nimbly, albeit lamely, over the objectionable parts, and when he reached the other side, and stood upon the short crisp turf leading up to the cliff, looked at the soles of his boots, shook his head, and swore aloud. Considerably relieved by this proceeding, he made his way slowly and gently up the ascent, pausing here and there, less from want of breath than from sheer absolute boredom. Rambling quietly on in his own easy-going fashion, now fencing at a handrail, now making a one, two, three sword-exercise cut, and finally demolishing a sprouting field-flower, he took some time to reach the top of the cliff. When there he looked carefully about him for a clean dry spot, and, having found one, dropped gently down at full length, and comfortably reclining his head on his arm, looked round him.

It was high tide below, and the calmest and softest of silver summer seas was breaking in the gentlest ripple on the beach, and against the base

of the high chalk cliff whereon he lay. The entrance to the little bay was marked by a light line of foam-crested breakers, beyond which lay a broad stretch of heaving ocean; but the bay itself was "oily calm," its breast dotted here and there with fishing-luggers outward-bound for the night's service, their big tan sails gleaming lightly and picturesquely in the red beams of the setting sun. Faintly, very faintly, from below rose the cries of the boatmen—hoarse monotonous calls, which had accompanied such and such acts of labour for centuries, and had been taught by sire to son, and practised from time immemorial. But the silence around the man outstretched on the cliff's top was unbroken save by the occasional cry of the sea-fowl, wheeling round and round above his head, and swooping down into their habitation-holes, with which the chalk-face was honeycombed. As he lay there idly watching, the sun, a great blood-red globe of fire, sank into the sea, leaving behind it a halo of light, in which the strips of puff-cloud hovering over the horizon—here light, thin, and va-

porous, there heavy, dense, and opaque — assumed eccentric outlines, and deadened to one gorgeous depth of purple. There were very few men who would have been insensible to the loveliness of the surroundings—very few but would have been impressed under such circumstances with a sense of the beauty of Nature and the beneficence of Providence. Captain Derinzy was one of these few. He saw it all, marked it all, looked at it leisurely and critically through half-shut eyes, as though scanning some clever picture or some scene at the theatre. Then, quietly dropping his head back upon his hand, he gave a prolonged yawn, and said quietly to himself, "O, dam'!"

"O, dam'!" Sun and sea and sky, purple clouds, foam-crested breakwaters, tan sails sunset-gilded, yohoing boatmen, nest-seeking curlews, hoary cliff. "O, dam'!" But that was not all. Lazily lying at full length, lazily picking blades of grass, lazily nibbling them, and lazily spitting them from his mouth, he said in a quaintly querulous tone,

"Beastly place! How I hate it! Beastly sea, and all that kind of thing; and those fellows going away in their beastly boats, smelling of fish and oil and grease, and beastliness, and wearing greasy woollen nightcaps, and smoking beastly strong tobacco in their foul pipes; and then people draw them, and write about them, and call them romantic, and all such cussed twaddle! Why the deuce ain't they clean and neat, and why don't they dance about, and sing like those fellows in *Masaniello?* And—O Lord! *Masaniello!* I didn't think I should even have remembered the name of anything decent in this infernal place! What's the time now?" looking at his watch. "Nearly eight. Gad! fancy having had a little dinner at the Windham, or, better still, at the Coventry, where they say that fellow—what's his name—Francatelli is so good, and then dropping down to the Opera to hear Cruvelli and Lablache, or the new house which Poyntz wrote me about—Covent Garden—where Grisi and Mario and the lot have gone! Fancy my never having seen the new house! Dammy, I

shall become a regular fogey if I stop in this infernal hole much longer. And not if I were stopping for myself either! If I'd been shaking a loose leg, and had outrun the constable, or anything of that sort, I can understand a fellow being compelled to pull up and live quiet for a bit, though there's Boulogne, which is much handier to town, and much jollier with the *établissement*, and plenty of *écarté*, and all that sort of thing, to go on with. But *this!* Pooh! that's the dam' folly of a man's marrying what they call a superior woman! I suppose Gertrude's all right; I suppose it will come off all straight; but I don't see the particular pull for me when it does come off. Here am I wastin' the best years of my life,—and just at a time when I haven't got too many of 'em to waste, by Jove,—just that another fellow may stand in for a good thing. To be sure, he's my son, and there's fatherly feelings, and all that sort of thing; but he's never done anything for me, and I think it's rather hard he don't come and take a little of this infernal dreariness on his own shoulders. I

shall have to cut away—I know I shall; I can't stand it much longer. I shall have to tell Gertrude—and I never can do that, and I haven't got the pluck to cut away without telling her, and I know she won't even let me go to old Dingo's for the shooting in the autumn. What an ass I was ever to let myself be swindled into coming into this beastly place! and how confoundedly I hate it! O, dam'! O, dam'!"

As he concluded he raised himself lightly to his feet, and commenced his descent of the hill as easily and jauntily as he had ascended it. His lame leg troubled him a little, and once when he trod on a rolling stone and nearly fell, he stopped and smiled pleasantly at the erring foot, and shook his cane facetiously over it. As he entered the village, he muttered to himself, "Good heavens, *du monde*, how very interesting!" For the hours of toil were over, and the shopkeepers and the wives of the fishermen, and such of the fisher-boys as had not gone to sea that evening, were standing at their doors and gossiping, or playing in the street. The lace-making girls were there

too, very pretty girls for the most part, with big black eyes and swarthy complexions and thick blue-black hair; their birthright these advantages, for in the old days one of the home-flying ships of the Spanish Armada had been wrecked on the Beachborough coast, and the saved mariners had intermarried with the village women, and transmitted their swarthy comeliness to their posterity. As the Captain passed by, hats were lifted and curtsies dropped, courtesy which he duly returned by touching his sombrero with his forefinger in the military style to the men, and by God-blessing the women and chin-chucking the girls with great heartiness.

So on till he arrived at his own house, where he opened the door from the outside, and entering the handsome old dining-room, was surprised to see the table laid for four persons.

"Hallo! what's this?" he said to a woman at the other end of the room with her back towards him. "Who is coming to dinner, Mrs. Stothard?"

"Have you forgotten?" said the woman

addressed, without turning her head. "Dr. Wainwright."

"O, ah!" growled Captain Derinzy in a subdued key. "Where's Annette?"

"In her own room."

"Why don't she come down?"

"Because she's heard Dr. Wainwright is expected, and has turned sulky, and won't move."

"O, dam'!" said Captain Derinzy.

## CHAPTER III.

### DURING OFFICE-HOURS.

THE "Office of H.M. Stannaries" is in a small back-street in the neighbourhood of Whitehall. What H.M. Stannaries were was known to but very few of the initiated, and to no "externs" at all. Old Mr. Bult, who, from time immemorial had been the chief-clerk of the office, would, on being interrogated as to the meaning of the word or the duties of his position, take a large pinch of snuff, blow the scattered grains off his beautifully-got-up shirt-frill, stare his querist straight in the face, and tell him that "there were certain matters of a departmental character, concerning which it was not considered advisable to involve oneself in communication with the public at large." The younger men were equally reticent. To those who tried to pump them, they replied

that they "wrote things, you know; letters, and those kind of things," and "kept accounts." What of? Why, of the Stannaries, of course. But what were the Stannaries? Ah, that was going into a matter of detail which they did not feel themselves justified in explaining. Their ribald friends used to say that the men in the Stannaries Office could not tell you what they had to do, because they did nothing at all, or that they did so little that they were sworn to secrecy on receiving their appointments, lest any inquisitive Radical member, burning to distinguish himself before his constituents in the cause of Civil-Service reform — a bray with which the dullest donkey can make himself heard—should rise in the House, and demand an inquiry, or a Parliamentary Commission, or some of those other dreadful inquisitions so loathsome to the official mind.

However, no matter what work was or was not done there, the Stannaries Office was a fact, and a fact for which the nation paid, and, according to the entries in the Civil-Service estimates, paid pretty handsomely. For there was a Lord Com-

missioner of Stannaries, at two thousand a-year, and a secretary at one thousand, and a private secretary at three hundred, and four-and-twenty clerks at salaries ranging from one to eight hundred, besides messengers and office-keepers. It was a well-thought-of office too; the men engaged in it went into good society, and were recognised as brother officials by the lofty bureaucrats of the Treasury and the Foreign Office—great creatures, who looked upon Somerset House and the Post Office as tenanted by the sons of peers' butlers, and who regarded the Custom House as a damp place somewhere on the Thames, where amphibious persons known as "tide-waiters" searched passengers' baggage. But it was by no means *infra dig.* to know men in the Stannaries; and that department of the public service annually contributed a by no means small share of the best dancers and amateur performers of the day. "Only give us gentlemen," Mr. Branwhite, the secretary, would say in his first official interview with a newly-appointed Lord Commissioner—for the patronage of his office was vested in the Lord

Commissioner of the Stannaries, who was a political functionary, and came in and went out with the Government, — "only give us gentlemen; that's all I ask. We don't require much brains in this place, and that's the truth; but we do want birth and breeding." And on these points Mr. Branwhite, who was the son of an auctioneer at Penrith, and who combined the grace of Dr. Johnson with the geniality of Dr. Abernethy, was inexorable. The cry was echoed everywhere throughout the office. "Let's have gentlemen, for God's sake!" little Fitzbinkie, the private secretary, would say, adding, with a look of as much horror as he could throw into his eyeglass—you never saw his eyes—"there was a fellow here the other day, came to see my lord. Worthington—you've heard about him—wonderful fellow at the Admiralty, great gun at figures, and organisation, and that kind of thing; reformed the navy almost, and so on; and—give you my honour—he had on a brown shooting-jacket, and a black-silk waistcoat—black-silk waistcoat, give you my word! Frightful, eh? Let's have gentlemen, at any price."

And the prayer of these great creatures was, to a large extent, answered. Most of the men in the Stannaries Office were pleasant, agreeable, sufficiently educated, well-dressed, and gentlemanly-mannered. Within the previous few years there had been a Scotch and an Irish Lord Commissioner, and each of them had left traces of his patronage in the office: the first in the importation of two or three grave men, who, not finding work enough to do, filled up their leisure by reading statistics, or working out mathematical problems; the last, by the appointment of half-a-dozen roistering blades, who did very little of the work there was to do, and required the help of a Maunders' *Treasury of Knowledge*, subscribed for amongst them, to enable them to do what they did; but who were such good riders and such first-rate convivialists that they were found in mounts and supper-parties for two-thirds of the year. The Irish element was, however, decidedly unpopular with Mr. Branwhite, the secretary, a cold-blooded, fish-like man, dry and tasteless, like a human captain's-biscuit, who had no animal

spirits himself, and consequently hated them in others. He was a long, thin, melancholy-looking fiddle-faced sort of a man, who tried to hide his want of manner under an assumed *brusquerie* and bluntness of speech. He had been originally brought up as a barrister, and owed his present appointment to the fact of his having a very pretty wife, who attracted the senile attentions and won the flagging heart of the Earl of Lechmere, who happened to be Lord Commissioner of the Stannaries when Sir Francis Pongo died, after forty years' tenure of the secretaryship. Lord Lechmere, having, when he called at Mrs. Branwhite's pretty villa in the Old-Brompton lanes, been frequently embarrassed by the presence of Mr. Branwhite, that gentleman's barristerial practice being not sufficient to take him often to the single chamber which he rented in Quality-court, Chancery-lane, thought this a favourable opportunity to improve the Branwhite finances, in this instance at least without cost to himself, and of assuring himself of Mr. Branwhite's necessitated absence from the Old-Brompton villa during certain periods of

the day. Hence Mr. Branwhite's appointment as secretary to H.M. Stannaries. There was a row about it, of course. Why did not the promotion "go in the office"? That is what the Stannaries men wanted to know, and what they threatened to get several members of parliament to inquire of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, who replied on Stannaries matters in the Lower House. The *Official Chronicle*, that erudite and uncompromising advocate of the Government service, came out with a series of letters signed "Eraser," "Half-margin," and "Nunquam Dormio;" and a leader in which Lord Lechmere was compared to King David, and Mr. Branwhite to Uriah the Hittite, the parallel in the latter case being heightened by the writer's suggestion that each had been selected "for a very warm berth." But the authorities cared neither for official remonstrances nor press sarcasms. They had their answer to the question why the promotion did not go in the office. Who was the next in rotation? Mr. Bult, the chief clerk. Was Mr. Bult competent in any way for the se-

cretaryship? Would the gentlemen of the Stannaries Office like to see their department represented by Mr. Bult? Certainly not. Very well, then, as it was impossible, after Mr. Bult's lengthened service, during which his character had been stainless, to pass him by, and place any of his juniors over his head, the only course was to seek for Sir Francis's successor in some gentleman unconnected with the place. This was the way in which Mr. Branwhite obtained his appointment. Lord Lechmere's party went out of office soon after, and Lord Lechmere himself has been dead for years; but Mr. Branwhite held on through the *régimes* of the Duke of M'Tavish and Viscount Ballyscran, and was all-powerful as ever now while Lord Polhill of Pollington was Lord Commissioner. What was thought of him, and, indeed, what was thought and said pretty plainly about most official persons and topics, we shall learn by looking into a large room on the ground-floor of the office known as the Principal Registrar's Room.

The Principal Registrar's Room must by no

means be confounded with the Registry, which was a very different, and not a very choice, place, where junior clerks got their hands into Stannaries work by stamping papers and covering their fingers with printers'-ink. The Principal Registrar's Room was appropriated to the Principal Registrar, and three of the best-looking assistants he could get hold of. The gentleman seated at the writing-table in the centre of the room, and reading the *Morning Post*, is the Principal Registrar, Mr. Courtney. He sits habitually with his back to the light, so that you cannot see his features very distinctly, — sufficiently, however, to make out that he is an old—in reality, a very old—man made up for a young one. He must have been of fair complexion and good-looking at one time, for his capitally-made wig is red in colour, and though his perfectly-shaven cheeks are mottled and pulpy, his features are well-cut and aristocratic. His throat, exposed to view through his turn-down collar, is old and wrinkled, reminding one of a fowl's neck; and his hands are soft and seemingly boneless. So much as

can be seen of his legs under the table reminds one of Punch's legs, exhibited by that "godless old rebel" in front of his show: the knees knock together, and the feet turn inwards towards each other with helpless imbecility. The only time that Mr. Courtney exhibits any great signs of vitality is in the evening at the Portland Club, where he plays an admirable game of whist, and where his hand is always heavily backed. Though he confesses to being "an old fellow," and quotes "*Me, nec fœmina nec puer*," with a deprecating shrug of the shoulders, he likes to hear the adventures of his young companions, and is by no means inconveniently strait-laced in his ideas. He has a comic horror of any "low fellows," or men who do not go into what he calls "sassiety;" he regards the Scotch division of the office as "stoopid," and contemplates the horsiness and loud tone of the Irish with great disfavour. He has, he thinks, a very good set of "boys" under him just now, and is proportionately pleasant and good-tempered. Let us look at his "boys."

That good-looking young man at the desk in

the farthest window is Paul Derinzy, only son of our friend the Captain, resident at Beachborough. The likeness to his father is seen in his thin, straight-cut features, small, lithe figure, and blue-black hair. The beard movement had just been instituted in Government offices, and Paul Derinzy follows it so far as to have grown a thick black moustache and a small, pointed beard, both very becoming to his sallow complexion and Velasquez type of face. He is about five-and-twenty years of age, and has an air of birth and breeding which finds him peculiar favour in his Chief's eyes. In his drooping eyelids, in his *pose*, in his outstretched arms, and head lying lazily on one side, there was an expression of languor that argued but ill for the amount of work to be gotten out of him in any way, and which proclaimed Mr. Paul Derinzy to be one of that popular regiment, "The Queen's Hard Bargains." But what of that? He certainly did his office credit by his appearance; there was very seldom much work to be done, and when there was, Paul was so popular that no one would refuse to under-

take his share. That man opposite, for instance, loved Paul as his brother, and would have done anything for him.

The man opposite is George Wainwright. He is four or five years older than Paul, and of considerably longer standing in the office. In personal appearance he differs very much from his friend. George Wainwright stands six feet in height, is squarely and strongly built, has a mass of fair hair curling almost on to his shoulders, and wears a soft, thick, fair beard. His hands are very large and very white, with big blue veins standing out on them, and his broad wrists show immense power. His eyes are large and prominent, hazel in colour, and soft in expression; he has a rather long and thick nose, and a large mouth, with fresh white teeth showing when he smiles. He is smiling now, at some remark made by the third assistant to the Principal Registrar, Mr. Dunlop, commonly called "Billy Dunlop," a pleasant fellow, remarkable for two things, imperturbable good-humour, and never letting anyone know where he lived.

"What are you two fellows grinning at?" asks Paul Derinzy, lazily lifting his head and looking across at them.

"I'm grinning at Billy's last night's adventures," replies George Wainwright. "He went to the Opera, and supped at Dubourg's."

"Horrible profligate! Alone?"

"So likely!" says Billy Dunlop. "All right, though; I mean, quite correct. Only Mick O'Dwyer with me."

"Mick O'Dwyer at the Opera?" says Paul in astonishment. "Why, he always swears he has no dress-clothes."

"No more he has; but I lent him some of mine—a second suit I keep for first nights of Jullien's Concerts, and other places where it is sure to be crammed and stivy. They fitted Mick stunningly, and he looked lovely in them; but he couldn't get my boots on, and he had to go in his own. There were lots of our fellows there, and they looked astonished to see Mick clothed and in his right mind; and at the back of the pit, just by the meat-screen there, you know, we met

Lannigan, the M.P. for some Irish place, who's Mick's cousin. He didn't recognise him at first; then when Mick spoke he looked him carefully all over, and said, 'You're lovely, Mick!' Then his eyes fell on the boots; he turned to me with a face of horror, and muttered, 'Ah, Billy, the brogues spoil the lot.'"

The two other men laughed so loudly at this story that Mr. Courtney looked up from his newspaper, and requested to know what was the joke. When he heard it he smiled, at the same time shaking his head deprecatingly, and saying,

"For my part, I confess I cannot stand Mr. O'Dwyer. He is a perfect Goth."

"Ah, Chief, that's really because you don't know him," said Wainwright. "He's really an excellent fellow; isn't he, Billy?"

"If Mick had only a little money he would be charming," said Dunlop; "but he hasn't any. He's of some use to me, however; I've had no occasion to consult the calendar since Mick's been here. He borrows half-a-crown of me every day, and five shillings on saints'-days, and—"

"Hold on a minute, Billy," said Paul Derinzy; "if you lent Mick your clothes, you must have taken him home—to where you live, I mean; so that somebody has found out your den at last. What did you do? Swear Mick to secrecy?"

"Better than that, sir; I brought the clothes down here, and made Mick put 'em on in his own room. No, sir, none of you have yet struck on my trail.

Far in a wild, unknown to public view,
From youth to age Mr. William Dunlop grew."

"Haven't you boys solved that mystery yet?" asked Mr. Courtney, smiling, and showing a set of teeth that did the dentist credit.

"Not yet, Chief; we very nearly had it out last week," replied Paul.

"When was that?"

"After that jolly little dinner you gave us down at Greenwich. You drove home, you know; we came up by rail. I suppose Quartermaine's champagne had worked the charm; but the lord of William's bosom certainly sat very lightly on its throne, and he was, in fact, what the wicked

call 'tight.' At the London-bridge Station I hailed a hansom, and Billy got in with me, saying I could set him down. Knowing that Billy is popularly supposed to reside in a cellar in Short's-gardens, Drury-lane, I told the driver to take us a short cut to that pleasant locality. Billy fell asleep, but woke up just as we arrived in Drury-lane, looked round him, shouted 'This will do!' stopped the cab, and jumped out. Now, I thought, I'd got him! I told the cabman to drive slowly on, and I stepped out and dodged behind a lamp. But Billy was too much for me: in the early dawn I saw him looking straight at me, smiting his nose with his forefinger, and muttering defiantly, 'No, you don't!' So eventually I left him."

"Of course you did.—No, no, Chief; William is not likely to fall a prey to such small deer. He will dissipate this mystery on one great occasion."

"And that will be—?"

"When he gets his promotion. When the edict is promulgated, elevating William to the

senior class, he will bid you all welcome to a most choice, elegant, and, not to put too fine a point on it, classical repast prepared in his own home."

"Well, if we're to wait till then, you'll enjoy your classic home, or whatever you call it, for a long time unencumbered with our society," said Derinzy. "Who's to have the next vacancy—Barlow's vacancy, I mean; who's to have it, Chief?"

"My dear boy," said Mr. Courtney, with a shoulder-shrug, "you are aware that I can scarcely be considered *au mieux* with the powers that be — meaning Mrs. Branwhite — and consequently I am not likely to be taken into confidence in such matters. But I understand, I have heard, quite *par hasard*," and the old gentleman waved his double glasses daintily in the air as he pronounced the French phrase, "that Mr. Dickson is the selected—person."

"D—n Mr. Dickson!" said Paul Derinzy.

"Hear, hear!" said Mr. Dunlop; "my sentiments entirely, well and forcibly put. A job, sir, a beastly job. 'John Branwhite, Jobmaster,'

ought to be written on the Secretary's door; 'neat flies' over deserving people's heads, and 'experienced drivers;' those scoundrels that he employs to spy, and sneak, and keep the fellows up to their work. No, sir, no chance for my being put up; as the party in the Psalms remarks, 'promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west.'"

"No, Billy, from the south-west this time," said Paul Derinzy. "Dickson's people have been having Branwhite and his wife to dine in Belgrave-square; and our sweet Scratchetary was so delighted with Lady Selina, and so fascinated by the swell surroundings, that he has been grovelling ever since: hence Dickson's lift."

"I have noticed," said Mr. Courtney, standing up and looking round him with that benevolent expression which he always assumed when about to give utterance to an intensely-unpleasant remark, "I have noticed that when a—point of fact, a cad—tries to get into sassiety on which he has no claim for admission, he invariably selects the wrong people. What you just said,

my dear Paul, bears out my argument entirely. This man Branwhite—worthy person, official position, and that kind of thing; no more knowledge of decent people than a Hottentot—struggles to get into sassiety, and who does he get to introduce him? Dickson, brewer-man, malt and hops and drugs, and blue boards with 'Entire,' and that kind of thing. Worthy person in his way, and married Lady Selina Walkinshaw, sister of Lord Barclay; but as to sassiety—very third-rate, God bless my soul, very third-rate indeed!"

"Well, I don't know any swells," said Billy Dunlop, "and I don't think I want to. From what I've seen of 'em, they're scarcely so convivial as they might be. Not in the drinking-line; I don't mean that—they're all there; but in the talking. And talking of talking, Mr. Wainwright, we've not had the pleasure of hearing your charming voice for the last quarter of an hour. Has it come off at last?"

"Has what come off, Billy?" asked George Wainwright.

"The amputation. Has our father the eminent &c. at last performed the operation and cut off our tongue? and is it then in a choice vial, neatly preserved in spirits-of-wine, covered over with a bit of a kid-glove, tied down with packthread, and placed on a shelf between a stethoscope and a volume of Quain's *Anatomy:* is that it?"

"Funny dog!" said George Wainwright, looking across at him. "I often wonder why you stop here, Billy, at two-forty, rising to three-eighty by annual increments of ten, when there's such a splendid future awaiting you in the ring. That mug of yours is worth a pound a-week alone; and then those charming witticisms, so new, so fresh, so eminently humorous—"

"Will you shut up?"

"How they would fetch the threepenny gallery! Why don't I talk? I do sometimes in your absence; but when you're here, I feel like one of 'those meaner beauties of the night, which poorly satisfy our eyes;' and when you begin I

ask myself, 'What are you when the moon shall rise?'"

"Shut up, will you? not merely your mouth, but your inkstand, blotting-book, and all the rest of the paraphernalia by which you wring an existence out of a too-easily-satisfied Government. You seem to have forgotten it's Saturday."

"By Jove, so it is!" said George Wainwright.

"Yes, sir," continued Mr. Dunlop; "like that party in Shakespeare, who drew a dial from his poke, and said it was just ten, and in an hour it would be eleven, I've just looked at my watch and find that in ten minutes it will be one o'clock, at which hour, by express permission of her Majesty's Ministers, signed and sealed at a Cabinet Council of which Mr. Arthur Helps was clerk, the gentlemen of H.M. Stannaries are permitted on Saturdays to—to cut it. That is the reason, odd as it may seem, why I like Saturday afternoon. Mr. Tennyson, I believe, knew some parties who found out a place where it was always Saturday

afternoon. Mr. W. Dunlop presents his compliments to the Laureate, and would be obliged for an introduction to the said place and parties."

"And what are you going to do with yourself to-day, Billy?"

"I am going, sir, if I may so express myself without an appearance of undue vanity, where Glory waits me. But I am prepared to promise, if it will afford any gentleman the smallest amount of satisfaction, that when fame elates me, I will at once take the opportunity of thinking of THEE!"

"And where is Glory at the present moment on the look-out for you, William?"

"Glory, sir, in the person of Mr. Kemp, the Izaak Walton of the day, will be found awaiting me in a large punt, moored on the silver bosom of the Thames, off the pleasant village of Teddington, a vessel containing, item two rods, item groundbait and worms for fishing, item a stone jar of—water! A most virtuous and modest way of spending the afternoon, isn't it? I wish I

could think it was going to be spent equally profitably by all!" and Billy Dunlop made a comic grimace in the direction of Paul Derinzy, and then assuming a face of intense gravity, took his hat off a peg, nodded, and vanished.

"Well, good-bye, my dear boys," said Mr. Courtney, coming out from behind the partition where the washing-stand was placed—it was a point of honour among the men to ignore his performance of his toilette—with his wig tightly fixed on and poodled up under his glossy hat, with his close-fitting lavender gloves, and with a flower in the button-hole of his coat; "*au revoir* on Monday. I'm going down to dear Lord Lumbsden's little place at Marlow to blow this confounded dust out of me, and to get a little ozone into me, to keep me up till I get away to Scotland. *Au revoir!*" and the old boy kissed his finger-tips, and shambled away.

"What are you going to do this afternoon, old man?" asked George Wainwright, pulling off his coat preparatory to a wash, of Paul Derinzy, who had been sitting silent for the last ten

minutes, now nervously plucking at his moustache, now referring to his watch, and evidently in a highly-nervous state.

"I don't know exactly, George," Paul replied, without looking up at his friend. "I haven't quite made up my mind."

"Going to play tennis?"

"No, I think not."

"Going down to the Oval, to have an hour or two with the professionals? Good day to-day, and the ground's in clipping order."

"No, I think not."

"Well, then, look here. Come along with me: we'll go for a spin as far as Hendon; come back and dine at Jack Straw's Castle at Hampstead, where the man has some wonderfully-good dry sherry which he bought the other day at a sale up there; and then walk quietly in at night. What do you say?"

"No, I think not to-day, old fellow."

"O, all right," said George Wainwright, after an instant's pause; "I'm sorry I spoke."

"Don't be angry, George, old boy! You

know I'm never so jolly as when I'm with you, and that there's no man on earth I care for like you," said Paul earnestly; "but I've half-promised myself for this afternoon, and until I hear —and I expect to hear every moment—I don't know whether I'm free or not."

"All right, Paul. I daresay I bore you sometimes, old man. I often think I do. But, you know, I'm five or six years older than you, and I was the first fellow you knew when you came into the service, through your people being acquainted with mine, and so I've a natural interest in you. Besides, you're a young swell in your way, and it does good to me to hear your talk and mark your freshness, and your—well, your youth. After thirty, a London man hasn't much of either."

"At it again, are you, George? Why don't you keep a property tub on the premises? You can't do your old Diogenes business effectively without it. Or do you want no tub so long as you have me for your butt? Sold you there, I think. You intended to say that yourself."

"Mr. Derinzy," said George Wainwright gravely, "you must indeed have lost every particle of respect for me when you could imagine that I would have descended to a low verbal jest of that nature. Well, since you won't come, I'll—"

"I never said I wouldn't yet, though I can't expect you to wait any longer for my decision. I—"

At that moment a messenger entered the room with a letter in his hand.

"For you, sir," he said to Mr. Derinzy; "the boy wouldn't wait to know if there was an answer."

"All right," said Paul, opening it hurriedly with a flushed face.

It had an outer and an inner envelope, both sealed.

"And I may be like the boy, I suppose," said George Wainwright, eyeing his friend with a curiously mixed expression of interest and pity; "I needn't wait to know if there's an answer."

"No, dear old George; I can't come with

you this afternoon," replied Paul; and then he looked at the letter again.

It was very short; only one line.

"At the usual place, at three to-day.

"DAISY."

## CHAPTER IV.

### AFTER OFFICE-HOURS.

PAUL DERINZY was left alone in the Principal Registrar's Room, and silence reigned in H.M. Stannaries Office. Snow does not melt away more speedily under the influence of the bright spring sun than do the clerks of that admirable department under the sound of one o'clock on a Saturday afternoon. Within ten minutes the place was deserted, the gentlemen had all cleared out, the messengers had closed-up desks and lockers, despatched papers, and bolted, and the place was left to Mr. Derinzy and the office-keeper. The latter went to the door with the last departing messenger, looked up the street and down the street, and with something of the soreness of a man who knew he was imprisoned for at least thirty-six hours, said he thought they were go-

ing to have some rain; an idea which the messenger—who had an engagement to take the young lady with whom he was keeping company to Gravesend on the Sunday—indignantly pooh-poohed. Not to be put down by this sort of thing, the office-keeper declared that rain was wanted by the country, to which the messenger replied that he thought of himself more than the country; and as the country had done without it for three weeks, it might hold over without much bother till Monday, he should think; and nodded, and went his way. The office-messenger kicked the door viciously to, and proceeded to make his round of the various rooms to see that everything was in order, and to turn the key in each door after his inspection. When he came to the Principal Registrar's Room he went in as usual, but finding Mr. Derinzy there performing on his head with two hairbrushes he begged pardon and retreated, wondering what the deuce possessed anyone to stop in the Office of H.M. Stannaries when he had the chance of leaving it and going anywhere else. A cynical fellow this office-keeper,

only to be humanised by his release on Monday morning.

Mr. Paul Derinzy was in no special hurry, he had plenty of time before him, and he had his toilette to attend to; a business which, though he was no set dandy, he never scamped. He was very particular about the exact parting of his hair, the polish of his nails, and the set of his neck-tie; and between each act of dressing he went back to his writing-table, and re-read the little note lying upon it. Once or twice he took the little note up, and whispered "darling!" to it, and kissed it before he put it down again. Poor Paul! he was evidently very hard hit, and just at the time of life, too, when these wounds fester and rankle so confoundedly. Your *ci-devant jeune homme*, your middle-aged gallant, *viveur, coureur des dames*, takes a love-affair as easily as his dinner: if it goes well, all right; if it goes to grief, equally all right; the sooner it is over the better he likes it. The great cynical philosopher of the age, whose cynicism it is now the fashion to deny —as though he could help it, or would have been

in the least ashamed of it—in one of his ballads calls upon all his coevals of forty to declare:

> "Did not the fairest of the fair
> Common grow, and wearisome, ere
> Ever a month had passed away?"

Middle-aged man has other aims, other resources, other objects. The "court, camp, grove, the vessel and the mart," fame, business, ambition, —all of these have claims upon his time, claims which he is compelled to recognise in their proper season; and, worst of all, he has recovered from the attacks of the "cruel madness of love," a youthful disorder, seldom or never taken in middle life; the glamour which steeped all surrounding objects in roseate hues no longer exists, and it is impossible to get up any spurious imitations of it. Time has taught him common sense; he has made friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; and instead of wandering about the grounds begging Maud to come out to him, and singing rapturous nonsense to the flowers, he is indoors dining with the Tory squires. But the young have but one idea in the world. They

are entirely of opinion, with Mr. Coleridge's hero, that all thoughts, "all passions, all delights that stir this mortal frame," are "ministers of love," and "feed his sacred flame." Perpetually to play at that sweet game of lips, to alternate between the heights of hope and the depths of despair, to pine for a glance and to be made happy by a word, to have no care for anything else, to ignore the friends in whose society you have hitherto found such delight, to shut your eyes knowingly, wilfully, and resolutely to the sight of everything but one object, and to fall down and persistently adore that object in the face of censure, contempt, and obloquy, is granted to but few men over thirty years of age. Let them not be ashamed of the weakness, rather let them congratulate themselves on its possession: it will give a zest and flavour to their middle life which but few enjoy.

Paul Derinzy, however, was just at that period of his life when everything is rose-coloured. He was even young enough to enjoy looking at himself in the glass, which is indeed a proof of youth; for there is no face or no company a man so soon

gets sick of as his own. But Paul stood before the little glass behind the washing-screen settling his hat, and gazing at himself very complacently, even going so far as to fetch another little glass from his drawer, and by aid of the two ascertaining that his back parting was perfectly straight. As he replaced the glass, he took out a yellow rosebud, carefully wrapped in wool, cleared it from its envelope, and sticking it in his buttonhole, took his departure.

Paul looked up at the Horse-Guards clock as he passed by, and finding that he had plenty of time to spare, walked slowly up Whitehall. The muslin-cravated, fresh-coloured, country gentlemen at the Union Club, and the dyed and grizzled veterans at the Senior United, looked out of the window at the young man as he passed, and envied him his youth and his health and his good looks. He strolled up Waterloo-place just as the insurance-offices with which that district abounds were being closed for the half-holiday, and the insurance-clerks, young gentlemen who, for the most part, mould themselves in dress and man-

ners upon Government officials, took mental notes of Paul's clothes, and determined to have them closely imitated so soon as the state of their salaries permitted. Quite unconscious of this sincerest flattery, Paul continued his walk, striking across into Piccadilly, and lounging leisurely along until he came to the Green Park, which he entered, and sat down for a few minutes. It was the dull time of the day—when the lower half of society was at dinner, and the upper half at luncheon—and there was scarcely anyone about. After a short rest, Paul looked at his watch, and muttering to himself, "She can't have started yet; I may just as well have the satisfaction of letting my eyes rest on her as she walks to the Gardens," he rose, and turned his steps back again. He turned up Bond-street, and off through Conduit-street into George-street, Hanover-square, and there, just by St. George's church, he stopped.

Not to the church, however, was his attention directed, but to the house immediately opposite to it. A big, red-faced, old-fashioned house, fresh-painted and pointed, with plate-glass win-

dows in its lower stories, and bronzed knockers, and shining bell-pulls, looking like a portly dowager endeavouring to assume modern airs and graces. Carriages kept driving up, and depositing old and young ladies, and the door, on which was an enormous brass-plate with "Madame Clarisse," in letters nearly half a foot long, was perpetually being flung open by a page with a very shiny face, produced by a judicious combination of yellow soap and friction—a page who, in his morning-jacket ruled with red lines, looked like a page of an account-book. Paul Derinzy knew many of these carriage-brought people,—for Madame Clarisse was the fashionable milliner of London, and had none but the very greatest of fine ladies in her *clientèle*,—and many of them knew him; but on the present occasion he carefully shrouded himself from observation behind one of the pillars of the church-portico. There he remained in an agony of impatience, fidgeting about, looking at his watch, glaring up at the bright-faced house, and anathematising the customers, until the clock in the church-tower above him chimed the half-hour

past two. Then he became more fidgety than ever. Before, he had taken short turns up and down the street, always returning sharply to the same spot, and looking round as though he had expected some remarkable alteration to have taken place during his ten-seconds' absence; now, he stood behind the pillar, never attempting to move from the spot, but constantly peering across the way at Madame Clarisse's great hall-door.

Within five minutes of the chiming of the clock, the great hall-door was opened so quietly that it was perfectly apparent the demonstrative page was not behind it. A young woman, simply and elegantly dressed, in a tight-fitting black-silk gown, and a small straw bonnet trimmed with green ribbon, with a black-lace shawl thrown loosely across her shoulders and hanging down behind, after a French fashion then in vogue, passed out, closed the door softly behind her, and started off in the direction of the Park. Then Paul Derinzy left his hiding-place, and, at a discreet distance, followed in pursuit.

There must have been something very odd or

very attractive in the personal appearance of this young woman, for she undoubtedly attracted a vast deal of attention as she passed through the streets. It would require something special, one would imagine, to intervene between a man and the toothache; and yet a gentleman seated in a dentist's anteroom in George-street, with a face swollen to twice its natural size, and all out of drawing, and vainly endeavouring to solace himself, and to forget the coming wrench, with the pleasant pages of a ten-years'-old *Bentley's Miscellany*, flung the book aside as he saw the girl go by, and crammed himself into a corner of the window to look after her retreating figure. Two sporting gentlemen standing at the freshly-sanded door of Limmer's Hotel, smoking cigars, and muttering to each other in whispers of forthcoming "events," suspended their conversation and exchanged a rapid wink as she flitted by them. The old boys sunning themselves in Bond-street, pottering into Ebers' for their stalls, or pricing fish at Groves's, were very much fluttered by the girl's transient appearance among them. The

little head was carried very erect, and there must have been something in the expression of the face which daunted the veterans, and prevented them from addressing her. One or two gave chase, but soon found out that the gouty feet so neatly incased in varnished boots had no chance with this modern Atalanta, who sailed away without a check, looking neither to the right nor to the left. Nor were men her only admirers; ladies sitting in their carriages at shop-doors would look at her half in wonderment, half in admiration, and whisper to each other, "What a pretty girl!" and these compliments pleased her immensely, and brought the colour to her face, adding to her beauty.

She crossed into the Park through Grosvenor Gate, and taking the path that lay immediately in front of her, went straight ahead about half-way between the Serpentine and the Bayswater-road, then through the little iron gate into Kensington Gardens, and across the turf for some distance until she came in sight of a little avenue of trees, through which glimmered the shining

waters of the Round Pond, backed by the rubicund face of stout old Kensington Palace. Then she slackened her pace a little, and began to look around her. There were but few, very few people near: two or three valetudinarians sunning themselves on such of the benches as were in sufficient repair; a few children playing about while their nursemaids joined forces and abused their employers; a shabby-genteel man eating a sandwich of roll-and-sausage — obviously his dinner—in a shamefaced way, and drinking short gulps out of a tin flask under the shadow of his hat; and a vagabond dog or two, delighted at having escaped the vigilance of the park-keeper, and snapping, yelping, and performing acrobatic feats of tumbling, out of what were literally pure animal spirits. Valetudinarians, children, nursemaids, and dogs were evidently not what the girl had come to see, for she stopped, struck the stick-handle of her open parasol against her shoulder, and murmured, "How provoking!" Just at that instant Paul Derinzy, who had been following her tolerably closely, touched her arm. She started,

wheeled swiftly round, and her eyes brightened and the flush rose in her cheeks as she cried,

"O, Mr. Douglas!"

"'Mr. Douglas,' Daisy!" said Paul Derinzy, with uplifted eyebrows; "'and why this courtesy,' as we say in Sir Walter Scott?"

"I mean Paul," said the girl; "but you startled me so, I scarcely knew what I said."

"Ah, 'Paul' is much better. The idea of your calling me anything else!"

"I don't know, I rather think you're 'Mr. Douglas' just now. You're always 'Mr. Douglas,' recollect, when I'm at all displeased with you, and I've lots of things for you to explain to-day."

"Fire away, child! Let's turn out of the path first, in amongst these trees. So—that is better. Now, then, what is the first?—by Jove, pet, how stunning you look to-day!"

A vulgar but expressive term, and one in general acceptance ten years ago. One, too, by no means inexpressive of the girl's beauty, for she was beautiful, and in a style that was then uncommon. She had red hair. Nowadays red hair

is by no means uncommon; it may be seen hanging in bunches in the *coiffeurs'* shops, and, with black roots, on the heads of most of the Dryads of the Wood. Ten years ago, to have red hair was to be subjected to chaff by the street-boys, to be called "carrots" by the vulgar, and to be pitied silently by the polite. Red hair *au naturel* was almost unknown — it was greased, and pomatumed, and cosmetiqued, and flattened into *bandeaux*, and twisted into ringlets, and deepened and darkened and disguised in every possible shape and way; it was "auburn," it was "chestnut," it was anything but red. This girl had red hair, and hated it, but was too proud to attempt to disguise it. So she wore it in a thick dry mass, heavy and crisp, and low on the forehead, and it suited her dead-white skin, creamy white, showing the rising blood on the smallest provocation, and her thin cheeks, and her pointed chin, and her gray eyes, and her long, but slightly impertinent, nose. No wonder people in the street turned round and stared at her; they had been educated up to the raven locks, and the short straight noses, and the

rounded chin style of beauty, formed on the true classical model, and they could not understand this kind of thing except in a picture of Mr. Dante Rossetti, or young Mr. Millais, or some of those other new-fangled artists who, they supposed, were clever, but who were decidedly "odd."

There was no doubt about her beauty, though, and none about her style. So Paul Derinzy thought, as he looked her up and down on saying the last-recorded words, and marked her tall, *svelte*, lissom figure; her neatly-shod, neatly-gloved feet and hands; her light walk, so free and yet so stately; and the simple elegance of her dress.

"You are a stunner, pet, and I adore you! There, having delivered myself of those mild observations, I will suffer you to proceed. You had a lot of things to say to me? Fire away!"

"In the first place, why were you not here to meet me, Mr. Douglas?"

"Again that detestable formality! Daisy, I swear, if you call me that again, I'll kiss you,—*coram publico, en plein air*, here before everybody; and that child, who will not take its eyes

off us, will swallow the hoopstick it is now sucking, and its death will lie at your door."

"No, but seriously—where have you been?"

"You want to know? Well, then, I don't mind telling you that I've followed you every step of the way from George-street here. Ah, you may well blush, young woman! I was the heart-broken witness of your flirtation with those youths in Bond-street."

"Horrid old things! No, but, Paul, did you really follow me from Madame's? Were you there to see me come out?"

"My child, I was there for three mortal quarters of an hour before you came out."

"That was very nice of you; *bien gentil*, as Mdlle. Augustine says. I wish you knew Mdlle. Augustine, she's a very great friend of Madame's."

"I wish I was Mdlle. Augustine. I say, Daisy, doesn't Madame Clarisse want a male hand in the business,—something in the light-porter line? I'm sure it would suit me better than that beastly office."

"What office, Paul?"

"Why, my office, darling,—where I go every day. Do you mean to say I didn't tell you about that, Daisy?"

"Certainly not; you've told me nothing about yourself."

"Well, you see, I've known you so short a time, and seen so little of you. O yes, I go to an office."

"Do you mean to say you're a clerk?"

"Well, yes—not to put too fine a point upon it, I suppose I am."

"What! a lawyer's-clerk?"

"No, no! D—n it all, Daisy, not as bad as that, nothing of the kind—Government office, Civil servant of the Crown, and all that kind of thing, don't you understand? Her Majesty's Stannaries—one of the principal departments of the State."

"And do you go there every day, Mr.—I mean, Paul?"

"Well, I'm supposed to, my darling; point of fact, I do go there—generally."

"Why don't you let me write to you there?"

"Write to me there! at the office! My dear child, there are the most stringent rules of the service against it. Any man in the office receiving a letter from a lady at the office would be—would be had up before the House of Commons, and very probably committed to the Tower!"

"What a curious thing! I thought you had nothing to do."

"Nothing to do! My darling Daisy, no galley-slave who tugs at the what-d'ye-call-em—oar—works harder than I do, as, indeed, Lord Palmerston has often acknowledged."

"And you're well paid for it? I mean, you get lots of money?" asked the girl, looking straight up into his face.

"Ye-yes, child. Yes, statecraft is tolerably well remunerated. Besides, men in my position have generally something else to live upon, some private means, some allowances from their people."

"Their people? O, you mean their families.

Yes, that must be very nice. Have you any—any people?"

"Yes, Daisy, my father and mother are both alive."

"They don't live with you in Hanover-street?"

"O no; they live down in the country, a long way off,—down in the west of England."

"And they're rich, I suppose?"

"Yes, they're very fairly off."

"And how many brothers and sisters have you, Paul?"

"None, darling; I am the only child; the entire hopes of the family are centred in this charming creature. Have you finished your questions, you inquisitive puss?"

"Quite. Did it sound inquisitive? I daresay it did; I daresay my foolish chatter was boring you."

"My pet Daisy, I'd sooner hear what you call your foolish chatter than anything in the world,—much sooner than Tamberlik's *ut de poitrine*, that all the musical people are raving about just

now. See, darling, let us sit down here. Take off your glove—this right glove. No? what nonsense! I may kiss your hand; there's no one looking but that fat child in the brown-holland knickerbockers, and if he doesn't turn his eyes away, I'll make a face at him, and frighten him into convulsions. There; now tell me about yourself."

"About myself? I've nothing to tell, Paul, except that we're horribly busy, and Madame plagues our lives out."

"Had you any difficulty in getting out to-day? You thought you would have when last I saw you."

"Dreadful difficulty; Madame fussed and fumed, and declared that she could not possibly let me go; but I insisted; and as the customers like me, and always ask for me, I suppose I am too valuable for her to say much."

"By the way, Daisy, do any men ever come to your place—with the women, I mean?"

"Sometimes; the husbands or the brothers of the ladies."

"Exactly. I suppose they don't—I mean, I suppose you don't—what a fool I am! No matter. Are you going back there this evening?"

"Yes, Madame would not let me come until I promised to be back by six to see the parcels off. Madame's going to the Opera to-night, and she'll be dressing at the time, and she must have somebody there she can depend upon."

"And you are the somebody, Daisy? How deuced nice to be able to reckon upon finding you anywhere when one wanted you! No, I say; no one can see my arm, it's quite covered by your shawl, and it fits so beautifully round your waist, just as if you had been measured for it at Madame Clarisse's.—Well, and what time will you be free?"

"Between eight and nine, I suppose; nearer nine."

"May I meet you when you come away, Daisy? Will you come with me to the theatre?"

"No, Paul, you know perfectly well that I will not. You know it is not of the slightest use proposing such things to me."

"Yes, I know it's of no use; I wish it were; it would be so jolly, and— Then you'll go straight back to South Molton-street?"

"Yes; to my garret!" and she laughed, rather a hard laugh, as she said these words.

"Don't say that, Daisy; I hate to hear you say that word."

"It's the right word, Paul, horrid or not. However, I shall get out of it some day, I suppose."

"How?" asked Paul, withdrawing his arm from her waist, and looking fixedly at her.

"How should I know?" said the girl, with the same hard laugh. "Feet foremost, perhaps, in my coffin. Somehow, at all events."

"You're in a curious mood to-day, Daisy."

"Am I? You'll see me in many curious moods, if we continue to know each other long, Paul,—which I very much doubt, by the way."

"Daisy, what makes you say that? You've not seen anyone—you've not heard—I mean, you don't intend to break with me, Daisy?"

"There is nothing to break, my poor Paul!"

"Whose fault is that? Whose fault is it that you remain in what you call your garret? Whose fault is it that you are compelled to obey Madame Clarisse, and to dance attendance on her infernal customers? Not mine, you must allow that. You know what is the dearest wish of my heart,—you know how often I have proposed that—"

"Stop, sir," said Daisy, laying her ungloved hand upon his mouth; "you know how often I have forbidden you to touch upon that subject, and now you dare to disobey merely because I was foolish enough to be off my guard for a moment, and to let some grumbling escape my lips. No, no, Paul, let us be sensible; it is very well as it is. We enjoy these stolen meetings; at least, I do—"

"And you think I don't, I suppose? O, no, certainly not!"

"You very rude bear, why do you interrupt me? I don't think anything of the sort. I know you enjoy them too. Then why should we bother ourselves about the future?"

"No; but you don't understand, Daisy. It

seems so deuced hard for me to have to see you for such a short time, and then for you to have to go away, and—"

"Don't you think it is quite as hard for me?"

"But then I'm so fond of you, don't you know! I love you so much, Daisy."

"And do you imagine I don't care for you? I don't say how much, but I know it must be more than a little."

"How do you know that, darling?"

"Because my love for you has conquered my pride, Paul. That shows me at once, without anything else, that I must love you. Do you think if I didn't care for you that I would consent to all this subterfuge and mystery which always surrounds us? Do you imagine that I have no eyes and no perception? Do you think I don't notice that you have chosen this place for our meeting because it is quite quiet and secluded? That when anyone having the least appearance of belonging to your world comes near us, you are in an agony, and turn your head aside, or

cover your face with your hand, lest you should be recognised? Do you think I haven't noticed all this? And do you think I don't know that all these precautions are taken, and all this fear is undergone, because you are walking with *me?*"

"My darling Daisy—"

"It's my own fault, Paul. Understand, I quite allow that. I am not in your rank of life. I am Madame Clarisse's showwoman; and I ought to look for my lovers amongst Messrs. Lewis and Allenby's young drapers, or the assistants at Godfrey and Cooke's, the chemists. They would be very proud to be seen with me, and would probably take me out on Sundays, along the Hammersmith-road in a four-wheel chaise. However, I hate chemists and drapers and four-wheel chaises, and prefer walking in this gloomy grove with you, Paul."

"You're a queer child," said Paul, with a sigh of relief at the subject being, as he thought, ended, and with a gratified smile at the pleasant words Daisy had last spoken.

"Yes," she said; "queer enough, Heaven knows! I suppose my dislike to those kind of people is because I was decently born and educated; and I can't forget that even now, when I'm only a milliner's shop-girl. But with all my queerness, I was right in what I said, wasn't I, Paul?"

"Why, my darling, it's a question, don't you see. I don't care for myself; I should be only too proud for people to think that I—that a girl like you would be about with me, and that kind of thing; but it's one's people, don't you know, and all that infernal cant and conventionality."

"Exactly. Now let us take a turn up and down the gloomy grove, and talk about something else."

She rose as she spoke, and passed her arm through his, and they began slowly pacing up and down among the trees. The "something else" which formed the subject of their talk it is not very difficult to divine, and though apparently deeply interesting to them, it would not be worth

transcription. It was the old, old subject, which retains its glamour in all countries and in all places, and which was as entrancing in that bit of cockney paradise, with the smoke-discoloured trees waving above them, and the dirty sheep nibbling near them, as it was to Œnone on Ida, or to Desdemona in Venice.

So they strolled about, trying endless variations of the same tune, until it became time for Daisy to think of returning to her place of business. Paul, after a little inward struggle with himself, proposed to walk with her as far as the Marble Arch; there would be no one in that part of the Park, he thought, of whom he need have the slightest fear; and Daisy appearing to be delighted, they started off. Just before they reached the end of the turf by the Marble Arch they stopped to say adieux. These apparently took a long time to get over, for Daisy's delicate little glove was retained in Paul's grasp, her face was upturned, and he was looking into it with love and passion in his eyes. So that they neither of them observed a tall gentleman who had just en-

tered the gates, and was striking across the Park when his eyes fell upon them, and who honoured them, not with a mere cursory glance, but with an intense and a prolonged stare. This gentleman was George Wainwright.

## CHAPTER V.

### FAMILY POLITICS.

"Was I a-dreamin', or did my Ann really tell me that somebody'd come down late last night in a po'-shay and driven to the Tower?" asked Mrs. Powler, the morning after her little supper-party, of Mrs. Jupp, who, whenever she could find a minute to spare from the troubles of housekeeping, was in the habit of "dropping-in" to gossip with her older and less-active neighbour.

"You weren't dreamin', dear; at least, I should say not, unless you have dreams like them chief butlers and bakers, and other cur'ous pipple in the Bible one reads of, which had their dreams 'terpreted. It's quite true—not that it's made more so by your Ann having said it; for a more shameful little liar there don't talk in this parish!" said Mrs. Jupp, getting very red in the face.

"You never took kindly to that gell, Mrs.

Jupp," said the old lady placidly,—she was far too rich to get in a rage,—"you never took kindly to that gell from the first, when I took her out of charity, owin' to her father's being throwed out of work on account of Jupp's cousin stoppin' payment."

Though said in Mrs. Powler's calmest tones, and without a change of expression on the speaker's childish old face, this was meant to be a hard hit, and was received as such by Mrs. Jupp.

"I don't know nothin' 'bout stoppin' payment, nor Jupp's cousins," said that lady, with a redundancy of negatives and a very shrill voice; "my own fam'ly has always paid their way, and Jupp has a 'count at the Devon Bank, where his writin' is as good as gold, and will be so long as I live. But I *du* know that I've never liked that gell Ann Bradshaw since she told a passill o' lies about my Joey and the hen-roost!"

"Well, well, never mind Ann Bradshaw," said Mrs. Powler, who had had vast experience of Mrs. Jupp's powers of boredom in connection with the

subject of her Joey and the hen-roost; "never mind about the gell; I allays kip her out o' your way, and I must ha' been main thoughtless when I let her name slip out just now before you. So someone did come in a po'-shay last night, then, and did drive to the Tower? Do you know who it was?"

"Not of my own knowledge," replied Mrs. Jupp in a softened voice—it would never have done to have quarrelled with Mrs. Powler, from whom she derived much present benefit, and from whom she expected a legacy—"but Groper, who was up there this morning wi' the sallt water for the Captain's bath, says it's the Doctor."

"Lor', now!" said Mrs. Powler, lifting up her hands in astonishment; "I can't fancy why passons go messin' wi' sallt water, and baths, and such-like. They must be main dirty, one would think, to take such a lot o' washin'. I'm sure Powler and I never did such redick'lous nonsense, and we was always well thought of, I believe. Lor', now, I've bin and forgotten who you said it was come down. Who was it, Harriet?"

"The Doctor from London—Wheelwright, or some such name; he that comes down three or four times a-year just to look at Mrs. Derinzy."

"He must be a cliver doctor, I du 'low, if his lookin' at her is enough to do her good," said Mrs. Powler, who was extremely literal in all things; "not but what she's that bad, poor soul, that anything must be a comfort to her."

"Did you ever hear tell what was ezackly the matter wi' the Captain's lady, Mrs. Powler?" asked Mrs. Jupp mysteriously.

"Innards," said the old lady in a hollow voice, laying her hand on the big mother-o'-pearl buckle by which her broad sash was kept together.

"Ah, but what sort of innards?" demanded Mrs. Jupp, who was by no means to be put off with a general answer on such an important subject.

"That I dunno," said Mrs. Powler, unwillingly confessing her ignorance. "Dr. Barton attends her in a or'nary way, but I niver heerd him say."

"It must be one of them obstinit diseases as

we women has," said Mrs. Jupp, "as though—not to fly in the face of Providence—but as though child-bearin' wasn't enough to have us let off all the rest!"

"She niver takes no med'cine," said Mrs. Powler, who firmly believed in the virtues of the Pharmacopœia, and whose pride it was that the deceased Powler, in his last illness, had swallowed "quarts and quarts." "I know that from that fair-haired young chap that mixes Barton's drugs,—his mother was a kind o' c'nexion o' Powler's, and I had 'im up to tea a Sunday week, and asked him."

"Well, I'd like very much to know what is the matter wi' Mrs. Derinzy," said Mrs. Jupp, harking back. "I ha' my own idea on the subjick; but I'd like to know for sure."

"If you're so cur'ous, you'd better ask Dr. Barton. He's just gone passt the window, and I s'pose he'll look in;" and almost before Mrs. Powler had finished her sentence there came a soft rap at the room-door, the handle was gently turned, and Dr. Barton presented himself.

He was a short, thickset, strongly-built man of about fifty-five, with close curly gray hair, bright eyes, mottled complexion, large hooked nose. He was dressed in a black cut-away coat, stained buff waistcoat, drab riding-breeches, and top-boots. He had a way of laying his head on one side, and altogether reminded one irresistibly of Punch.

"*Good*-morning, ladies," said the doctor in a squeaky, throaty little voice, which tended to heighten the resemblance; "I seem to ha' dropped in just in the nick o' time, by the looks of ye. Mayhap you were talking about me. Mrs. Jupp, you don't mean to say that—" and the little man whispered the conclusion of the sentence behind his hat to Mrs. Jupp, while he privately winked at Mrs. Powler.

"Get 'long wi' ye, du!" said Mrs. Jupp, her face suffused with crimson.

"I niver see such a man in all my born days," said old Mrs. Powler, with whom the doctor was a special favourite, laughing until the tears made watercourses of her wrinkles, and were

genially irrigating her face. "No; no such luck, I tell her."

"Well, as to luck, that's all a matter o' taste," said Mrs. Jupp; "we were talking about something quite different to that."

"What was it?" asked the doctor.

"'Bout Mrs. D'rinzy's health Harriet was askin'," explained Mrs. Powler.

"A-h!" said the doctor, shaking his head, and looking very solemn.

"Is she so bad as all that?" asked Mrs. Jupp, who was visibly impressed by the medico's pantomime.

"Great sufferer, great sufferer!" said the little man, with a repetition of the head-shake.

"Well, but she gets about; comes down into t' village, and such-like," argued Mrs. Powler.

"O, yes; no reason why she shouldn't; more she gets about, indeed, the better," said the doctor.

"It's innards, I suppose?" asked Mrs. Jupp, whose craving for particulars of Mrs. Derinzy's disorder was yet unsatisfied.

"Well, partially, partially," said the doctor, slowly rubbing the side of his nose with the handle of his riding-whip; "it's a complication, a mixture, which it would be difficult to get an unprofessional person to understand."

"Talkin' o' that, Barton," said Mrs. Powler, "I s'pose you know the London doctor came down last night?"

"Dr. Wainwright? O, yes; I was up at the Tower just now to meet him. As I'm left in charge of Mrs. Derinzy, we always have a consultation whenever he comes down."

"I s'pose he's a raal cliver man, this Wheelwright, or they wouldn't have him come all this way to see her," said Mrs. Powler.

"Clever!" echoed the doctor; "the very first man of the day; the very first!"

"Then why wasn't he sent for to see Sir Her-c'les when he was laid up that bad last spring?" asked Mrs. Jupp; "there was another one come down from London then."

"That was quite a different case, my dear madam. Sir Hercules Dingo was laid up with

gout; Mrs. Derinzy's complaint is not gout; and Dr. Wainwright is the first man of the day in—well, in such cases as Mrs. Derinzy's."

No more specific information than this could Mrs. Jupp obtain from the doctor, who was "that close when he liked," as his friends said of him, that even the blandishments of Mrs. Barton failed to extract any of his professional secrets. So Mrs. Jupp gave it up in despair, and began talking on general topics. Be sure the conversation did not progress far without the Derinzys again cropping up in it. They were staple subjects of discussion in Beachborough, and the most preposterous stories regarding them and their origin, whence and why they came to the remote Devonshire village, and the reason for their enforced stay there, obtained, if not credence, at least circulation. What their real history was, I now propose to tell.

Five-and-twenty years before the date of this story, the firm of Derinzy and Sons was well known and highly esteemed in the City of Lon-

don. They were supposed to have been originally of Polish extraction, and their name to have been Derinski; but it had been painted up as Derinzy for years on the door-posts of their warehouse in Gough-square, Fleet-street, and it was so spelt on all the invoices, bill-heads, and other commercial literature of the firm. Warehouses, invoices, and bill-heads? Yes, despite their Polish extraction and distinguished name, the Derinzys were neither more nor less than furriers—wholesale, and on a large scale, it was true, but still furriers. Their business was enormous, and their profits immense. The old father, Peter Derinzy, who had founded the firm, and whose business talent and industry were the main causes of its success, had given up active attendance, and was beginning to take life leisurely. He came down twice a-week, perhaps, in a handsome carriage-and-pair, to Gough-square, just glanced over the books, and occasionally looked at some samples of skins, on which his opinion—still the most reliable in the whole trade—was requested by his son, and then went back to his mansion at Muswell Hill, where

his connection with business was unknown or ignored, and where he was Squire Derinzy, dwelling in luxury, and passing his time in the superintendence of his graperies and pineries, his forcing-houses and his farm.

The affairs of the house did not suffer by the old gentleman's absence. In his eldest son Paul, on whom the command devolved in his father's absence, the senior partner had a representative possessing all the experience and tact which he had gained, combined with the youth and energy which he had lost. Men of high standing in the City of London, many years his seniors, were glad to know Paul Derinzy, eager to ask his advice, and, what is quite a different matter, frequently not unwilling to take it in regard to the great speculations of the day. The merchants from the north of Europe with whom he transacted business—and to all of whom he spoke in their own language, without the slightest betrayal of foreign accent or lack of idiom—looked upon him as an absolute wonder, more especially when contrasted with his own countrymen, who for the

most part spoke nothing but English, and little of that beyond oaths, and spread his renown far and wide. He was a tall, high-shouldered, big-boned man, prematurely bald, and, being very short-sighted, wore a large pair of spectacles, which impelled his younger brother Alexis, then fresh from school, and just received into the counting-house, to be initiated into the mysteries of trade preparatory to being made a partner, to call him "Gig-lamps." Paul Derinzy was not a good-tempered man, and at any time would have disliked this impertinence; but addressed to him as it was, before the clerks, it nettled him exceedingly. He forbade its repetition under pain of summary punishment, and when it was repeated, being a big strong man, he caught his younger brother by the collar, dragged him out of the counting-house to a secluded part of the warehouse, and then and there thrashed him to his heart's content. It was, perhaps, this summary treatment, combined with a dislike for desk-work and indoor confinement, that induced Master Alexis to resign his clerical stool and to suggest to his father the pro-

priety of purchasing for him a commission in the army. Old Derinzy was by no means disposed to act upon this idea, but his wife, who worshipped and spoiled her youngest son, urged it very strongly; and as Paul, who was of course consulted, recommended it as by far the best thing that could be done for his brother, the old gentleman at last gave way, and in a very short time young Alexis was gazetted as cornet in a hussar regiment then on its way home from India, and joined the dépôt at Canterbury.

After that little episode, Paul Derinzy took small heed of his brother's proceedings, or, indeed, of anything save his business, in which he seemed to be entirely absorbed. He was there early and late, taking his dinner at a tavern, and retiring to chambers in Chancery-lane, where he read philosophical treatises and abstruse foreign philosophical works until bed-time. He had no intimate friends, and never went into society. Even after his mother's death, when he spent most of his leisure time, such as it was, at Muswell Hill, with his father, then become very old and feeble,

he shrank from meeting the neighbours, and was looked upon as an oddity and a recluse. In the fulness of time old Peter Derinzy died, leaving, it was said, upwards of a hundred thousand pounds. By his will he bequeathed twenty thousand pounds to his second son, Captain Alexis Derinzy, while the whole of the rest of his fortune went to his son Paul, who was left sole executor.

Captain Alexis Derinzy made use of very strong language when he learned the exact amount of the legacy bequeathed to him by his father's will. He had been always given to understand, he said, that the governor was a hundred-thousand-pound man, and he thought it deuced hard that he shouldn't have had at least a third of what was left, specially considering that he was a married man with a family, whereas that money-grubbing old tradesman, his elder brother, had nobody but himself to look after. The statement of Captain Derinzy's marriage was so far correct. About two years previous to his father's death, the Captain being at the time, like another captain famed in song, "in country quarters,"

had made the acquaintance of a young lady, the daughter of a clever, ne'er-do-weel, potwallopping artist, who, when sober, did odd bits of portrait-painting, and, among other jobs, had painted correct likenesses of Captain Derinzy's two chargers. Captain Derinzy's courtship of the artist's daughter, unlike that of his prototype in verse, was carried on with the strictest decorum, not, one is bound to say, from any fault of the Captain's, who wished and intended to assimilate it to scores of other such affairs which he had had under what he considered similar circumstances. But the truth was that he had never met anyone like Miss Gertrude Skrymshire before. A pretty woman, delicate-looking, and thoroughly feminine, she was far more of an old soldier than the Captain, with all his barrack training and his country-garrison experience. Years before, when she was a mere child of fourteen, she had made up her mind, after experience of her father's career and prospects, that Bohemianism, for a woman at least, was a most undesirable state, and she had determined that she would marry either for wealth or

position; the latter preferable, she thought, as the former might be afterwards attainable by her own ready wit and cleverness; while if she married a *bon bourgeois*, she must be content to remain in Bloomsbury, Bedfordshire, or wherever she might be placed, and must abandon all hope of rising. When Captain Derinzy first came fluttering round her, she saw the means to her end, and determined to profit thereby. She was a very pretty young woman of her style, red and white, with black eyes and flattened black hair, altogether very like those Dutch dolls fashionable at that period, who were made of shiny composition down to their busts, but then diverged abruptly into calico and sawdust. She had a trim waist and a neat ankle, and what is called nowadays a very "fetching" style, and she made desperate havoc with Captain Derinzy's heart; so much so, that when she declined with scorn to listen to any of the eccentric—to say the least of them—propositions which he made to her, and forbade him her presence for daring to make them, he, after staying away one day, during which he was in-

tensely wretched, and would have taken to drinking but that he had tried it before without effect, and would have drowned himself but that he did not want to die, came down and made an open declaration of his love to Gertrude, and a formal proposal for her hand to Skrymshire *père*.

Alick Derinzy had had Luck for his friend several times in his life; he had "pulled off" some good things in sweepstakes, and been fortunate in his speculations on "events;" but he never made such a *coup* as when he took Gertrude Skrymshire for his wife. She undertook the *ménage* at once, sold off his unnecessary horses, and paid off outstanding ticks; made him get an invitation for himself and her to Muswell Hill, and spent a week there, during which she ingratiated herself with the old gentleman, and specially with Paul; speedily took the reins of government into her hands, and drove her husband skilfully, without ever letting him feel the bit. When his father died, and Alick was for crying out at the smallness of his legacy, Gertrude stopped his mouth, pointing out that they had a sufficiency

to live on, to which the sale of her husband's commission would add; that they could go and live in a small house in a good suburb of town, where they could make it very comfortable for Paul, who would doubtless see a good deal of them, and who, as he was never likely to marry, would most probably leave his enormous fortune to *their* Paul, their only son, who, of course without any definite views, had been named after his uncle.

It was a notable scheme, well-planned and well-executed, but it failed. Alick sold out, and they took a pleasant little house at Brompton, a suburb then not much known, and principally inhabited, as now, by actors and authors; and they furnished it charmingly, and Gertrude herself went down in her deep mourning into the City, and penetrated to Paul's sanctum in Gough-square, and insisted on his coming to stay a day or two with them, and gained his promise that he would come. On her return she said she had found Paul very much altered, but when her husband asked her in what manner, she could not

explain herself. Alick himself explained it in his own peculiar barrack-room and billiard-table phraseology, after he had seen his brother, expressing his opinion that that worthy was "going off his head, by G—!"

No doubt Paul Derinzy was a changed man. It was not that he looked much older than his years—that he had always done; but his skin was discoloured, his eyes lustreless, his head bowed, his spirit gone. He said himself that twenty years' incessant labour without any holiday had told upon him, and that he was determined at last to take some rest. He should start immediately with Herr Schadow, one of their largest customers, for Berlin and St. Petersburg, and should probably be away for some months. Dockress, who had been brought up from boyhood in Gough-square, and who knew every trick and turn of the trade, would manage the business during his absence, and he should go away perfectly satisfied that things would go on just as smoothly as if he were there to overlook them.

Paul Derinzy carried out his intention. He

went away to the Continent with Herr Schadow, and Mr. Dockress took charge of the business in Gough-square. He heard several times from his principal within the next few weeks, letters dated from various places, their contents always relating to business. Mrs. Alick had also several letters from her brother-in-law, but to her he wrote on different topics. He seemed to be in wonderful spirits, wrote long descriptions of the places he had visited, and humorous accounts of people he had met; said he felt himself quite a different man, that he had just begun to enjoy life, and looked upon all his earlier years as completely lost to him. He loathed the very name of business, he said, and hated the mere idea of coming back to England. He should certainly go as far as St. Petersburg, and prolong his stay abroad as long as he felt amused by it. He arrived in St. Petersburg. Dockress heard of him from there relative to consignment of some special skins which he had been lucky enough to get hold of, and which his old business instinct, not to be so easily shaken off as he imagined,

prompted him to buy. Mrs. Alick also heard from him a fortnight later; he described the place as delightful, the society as charming, said he was "going out a good deal," and was thoroughly enjoying himself. Then nothing was heard of him for weeks by the family in the pretty little house at Brompton, and Mrs. Alick became full of wonderment as to his movements. Dockress could have given her some information. It is true that he had had no letters from his chief, but a nephew of Schadow's, who was a clerk in the Gough-square house, had had a hint dropped to him by his uncle that it was not improbable that the head of the house would, on his return, which would be soon, bring with him a wife, as he was supposed to be very much in love with a young French lady, a governess in a distinguished Russian family where he visited. Schadow junior communicated this intelligence to Dockress junior, who sat at the same desk with him, who communicated it to Dockress senior, who whistled, and, as soon as his son was out of hearing, muttered aloud that it was "a rum go."

"Rum" as it was, though, it was true. A short time afterwards Dockress received official intimation of the fact, and the same post brought the news to Mrs. Alick. Paul's note to his sister-in-law was very short. It simply said that she and Alexis would probably be surprised to hear that he was about to be married to Mdlle. Delille, a young French lady, whom he had met in society at St. Petersburg. They were to be married at once, and would shortly after set out for England, not, however, with the intention of remaining there. He infinitely preferred living abroad, so that he should merely return for the purpose of settling his business, and should then retire to the Continent for the rest of his life.

Alick Derinzy gave a great guffaw as his wife read out this epistle to him, and chaffed her in his ponderous way, referring to the counting of chickens before they were hatched, and the hallooing before you were out of the wood, and other apposite proverbs.

"That's rather a bust-up for your scheme, Gertrude," he said with a loud laugh, "old Paul

going to marry; and he's just one of those fellows that have a large family late in life; and a neat chance for *our* Paul's coming in for any of the old boy's money. That game is u-p, Mrs. Derinzy."

But Mrs. Derinzy, though she looked serious at the news which the letter contained, and shook her head at her husband's speech, said there was no knowing what Time had in store for them, and they must wait and see.

They waited, and in due course they saw—Paul's wife, Mrs. Derinzy: a pretty, slight, fragile little woman, with large black eyes, olive complexion, and odd restless ways. Mrs. Alick set her down as "thoroughly French;" Alick spoke of her as a "rum little party;" but they neither of them saw much of her. Paul brought her to dine two or three times, and the women called upon each other, but the newly-married pair were so thoroughly occupied with theatre-goings, and opera-visitings, and society-frequenting, that it was with the greatest difficulty they could be induced to find a free night during the month they stayed

in town. London did not seem capable of producing enough pleasure or excitement for Paul Derinzy. He was like a boy in the ardour of his yearning for fresh amusement, he entered into everything with wild delight, and seemed as though he should never tire of taking his pretty little wife about, and what Alexis called "showing her off."

During that month the great house of Derinzy and Sons ceased to exist, and in the next issue of the great red book, the *Post-Office Directory*, the name which had been so respected and so highly thought of was not to be found. Certainly Paul Derinzy retained a share in its fortunes, but he sold the largest part of the business to Dockress and Schadow, whose friends came forth nobly to help them in the purchase, and it was under their joint names that the house was in future conducted.

Then Paul and his wife went away, and were only occasionally heard of. It had been their intention to travel about, and they were apparently carrying it out, for Paul's letters to Mrs.

Alick, with whom he still corresponded, were dated from various places, and he could only give her vague addresses where to reply. They were passing the winter at Florence, when he wrote to his sister-in-law that a little daughter had been born to them, but that his wife had been in great peril, for some time her life had been despaired of, and even then, at the time of writing, she was seriously ill. Alick Derinzy guffawed again at this news, remarking that their Paul's nose was out of joint now, and no mistake. Their Paul, then a stalwart boy of four years old, who was playing about the room at the time, exclaimed, "No, my nose all right!" at the same time grasping that organ with his chubby hand; and Mrs. Derinzy checked her husband's unseemly mirth, and remarked that since his brother had married, it was more to their interest that his child should be a girl than a boy. There was an interval of six months before another letter arrived to say that Mrs. Paul remained very ill, that her constitution had received a shock which it was doubtful whether it would ever recover, but that the little

girl was thriving well. Paul added that he was in treaty for a place on the Lake of Geneva of which he had heard, and that if it suited him the family would most probably settle down there. After another six months Mrs. Alick heard from her brother-in-law that they had settled on the Swiss lake, with a repetition of the statement that his wife was helplessly ill, and the little girl thriving apace. During the four succeeding years very nearly the same news reached the Alick Derinzys at the same intervals,—Paul was still located in the Swiss château, his wife remained in the same state of illness, and his little girl still throve.

"No chance for our Paul," said Alexis Derinzy disconsolately.

"Our Paul" was growing into a fine boy, and his father gave himself much mental exercitation as to whether he could "stand the racket" of educating him at Eton or Harrow.

One evening a cab drove up to the door, and a gentleman alighted and asked for Mrs. Derinzy. Alick was, according to his usual practice, at the

club, enjoying that pleasant hour's gossip so dear to married gentlemen who are kept rather tightly in hand at home, and which they relinquish with such looks of envy at the happy bachelors or more courageous Benedicks whom they leave behind. But Mrs. Alick was in her very pretty little boudoir, into which she desired the stranger might be shown.

He came in; a man who had probably been tall, but was now bent double, walking with a stick, and then making but slow progress; a man with snow-white hair and long beard of the same hue, wrapped from head to foot in a huge fur coat of foreign make. Mrs. Derinzy saw that he was a gentleman, but did not recognise him. It was not until he advanced to her and mentioned his name that she knew him for her brother-in-law, Paul. She received him very warmly, and he seemed touched and gratified, so far as lay in him. Where were his wife and his little daughter? she asked. They were—over there, in Switzerland, he said with an effort. He was alone, then, in London? He must come and stay with them.

No; he had been in London three or four days. He came over on some special business, and he was about to return to the Continent the next day, but he did not like to go without having seen her. He fidgeted about while he stopped, and seemed nervously anxious to be off; but Mrs. Alick, with a woman's tact, began to ask him questions about his child, and he quieted down, and spoke of her with rapture. She was the joy of his soul, he said, the one bright ray in his life, of which, indeed, he spoke in very melancholy terms. Alick came home from his club in due course, and was as surprised as his wife had been at the alteration in Paul's appearance, and took so little pains to disguise his impressions, that Paul himself made allusion to his white hair and his bowed back, and said he had had trouble enough to have broken a much younger and stronger man. He did not say what the trouble was, and they did not like to ask him. Alick had thought it was pecuniary worry; that his brother had "dropped his money," as he phrased it. Mrs. Alick saw no reason to ascribe it to any such source. But she noticed

that her brother-in-law said very little about his wife, and she felt certain that the marriage which had promised so brilliantly had turned out a disappointment, and that the shadow which darkened his life was of home creation.

Paul Derinzy bade adieu to his brother and his sister-in-law that night, and they never saw him again. About a month afterwards he wrote from Switzerland that his wife was dead, that he should give up the château on the lake, and travel for a time, taking the child with him. Ten years passed away, during which news of the travellers came but rarely to the residents in Brompton, who, indeed, thought but little of them. The ex-captain of dragoons had settled down into a quiet, whist-playing, military-club-frequenting fogey; Mrs. Derinzy managed him with as much tact as usual, and with rather a slacker rein; and young Paul, now eighteen years old, was just appointed to the Stannaries Office, when an event occurred which entirely changed the aspect of affairs. This was the elder Paul Derinzy's death, which was communicated to his brother by a tele-

gram from Pau, where it happened. By this telegram Alick was bidden to come to Pau instantly to take charge of Miss Derinzy, and to be present at the reading of the will. Alick went to Pau, and his wife went with him. They found Annette Derinzy — a tall girl of fourteen, "a little too foreign, and a good deal too forward," Mrs. Derinzy pronounced her—prostrated with grief at her recent loss. And they were present at the reading of the will, under which they found themselves constituted guardians of the said Annette Derinzy, who inherited all her father's property, with the exception of a thousand a-year, which was to be paid to them for their trouble during their lives, and five thousand pounds legacy to their son Paul at his father's death. Their authority over Annette was to cease when she came of age at twenty-one, but up to that time they had the power of veto on any marriage-engagement she might contract, and any defiance on her part was to be punished by the loss of her fortune, which was to be divided amongst certain charities duly set forth in the will.

"Only five thou. for our poor boy, and that not till we're dead! and Paul must have left over eighty thousand!" said Captain Derinzy to his wife, when they were in their own room at the hotel after the will had been read.

"Our Paul shall have the eighty thousand," said Mrs. Derinzy in reply.

"The devil he shall!" said the Captain. "Who will give it him?"

"The guardians of his wife!" said Mrs. Derinzy.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MRS. STOTHARD.

MRS. POWLER and Mrs. Jupp were by no means the only persons in Beachborough to whom Mrs. Stothard's position in the household at the Tower afforded subject-matter for gossip. It may be safely asserted that there never was a tea-drinking, followed — as was usually the case among the better classes in that hospitable neighbourhood—by a consumption of alcohol "hot with," at which Mrs. Stothard was not served-up as a toothsome morsel, and forthwith torn into shreds, if not by the teeth, at least by the tongues of the assembled company. To those simple minds, all social standing was fixed and unalterable—one must either be mistress or servant; the lines of demarcation were strongly defined; they knew of no softening gradations; and they could not un-

derstand Mrs. Stothard. "She hev' her dinner by herself, and her own teapot allays brought to her own room—leastways, 'cept when she do fetch it herself, Miss Annette bein' sleepy or out of sorts, and not likin' to be disturbed by the servants." Such was the report which Nancy Wickstead, who had gone to live as nursemaid up at the Tower soon after the arrival of the family, brought down about this redoubtable woman. The villagers only knew her by report, by crumbs and fragments of rumours dropped by Nancy Wickstead when she came down among her old familiars for an "evening out," or by the tradesmen who called at the house, and who drew largely on their own imagination for the stories which they told. They had only caught fleeting glimpses of Mrs. Stothard as she passed along the corridor or crossed from room to room, but even those cursory glances entitled them to swagger before their fellow-villagers who had never seen her at all—never. Many of them tried to think they had, and after renewed descriptions of her firmly believed that they had;

but it was all an exercitation of their imagination, for they never went to the Tower, and Mrs. Stothard never left it. Never, under any pretence. In the two years during which the family had resided at the Tower, Mrs. Stothard had never passed through the entrance-gate. She took exercise sometimes in the grounds; even that but rarely; but she never left them. Young Dobbs, the grocer, a bright spirit, once took it into his head to chaff about her with the servants, to ask who was the "female hermit," and what duties she performed in the house; a flight of fancy not very humorous in itself, and unfortunate in its result. The next day Mrs. Derinzy called on Dobbs senior, asked him for his bill, paid it, and removed the family custom to Sandwith of Bedminster.

Once seen, a woman not easily to be forgotten, from her physical appearance. About eight-and-forty years of age, tall and very strongly built, with broad shoulders and big wrists, knuckles both of wrists and hands very prominent, great frontal development, but low forehead, a penthouse for

deep-set gray eyes. Light hair, thin, dull, and colourless; thin and colourless cheeks; thin lips, closing tightly over rows of small, gleaming dog's-teeth; big, square, massive jaw; cold, taciturn, and watchful, with eyes and ears of wonderful quickness, wits always ready, hands always active and strong. She came to Mrs. Derinzy on Dr. Wainwright's recommendation as "exactly the person to suit her," and she fulfilled her mission most exactly. What that mission was we shall learn; what her previous career had been we will state.

She was the only daughter of one Robert Hall, a verger of Canterbury Cathedral, a clever, drunken dog, whose vergership was in constant peril, but who contrived to hoodwink the cathedral dignitaries as a general rule, and who on special occasions of outbreak invariably found some influential friend to plead his cause. He was a bookbinder as well as a verger, and in his trade showed not merely skilful manipulation, but rare taste, taste which was apparently inherited by his daughter Martha, who, at seventeen years

of age, had produced some illuminated work which was pronounced by the *cognoscenti* in such matters to be very superior indeed. The cathedral dignitaries patronised Martha Hall's illuminations, and displayed them in their drawing-rooms at those pleasant evening gatherings, so decorous and so dull, and where the bearers of the sword mingle with the wearers of the gown, yawn away a couple of hours in looking over photograph-albums and listening to sonatas, and after a sandwich and a glass of sherry, lounge away to begin the night with devilled biscuits, billiards, and brandy-and-soda-water. The military, to whom these illuminations were thus introduced, thought it would be the "correct thing" to buy some of them; they would look "deuced well" in their rooms; so that the front-parlour of the verger's little house in the precincts was speedily reëchoing to clanking sabres and jingling spurs, the owners of which were none the less ready to come again because the originator and vendor of the wares was "doosid nice girl, don't you know?—not exactly pretty, but something doosid nice

about her!" Martha Hall's handiwork was seen everywhere in barracks, and "many a holy text around she strewed," and had them hung up in subalterns' rooms between portraits of Mdlle. Joliejambe and the Blisworth Bruiser.

The sabres clanked so often and the spurs jingled so much in the verger's front-parlour, that the neighbours—instigated, perhaps, less by their friendly feelings and their virtue than their jealousy—thought it time to speak to Robert Hall about it, and to ask him if he knew what he was doing, and what seed he was sowing, to be reaped in shame and disgrace. Wybrow, the mourning-jeweller—who made very tasty little designs of yews and willows out of dead people's hair—declared that his shop was never so full as his neighbour's; but then either the officers had no dead relations, or did not care for such melancholy *souvenirs*. Heelball, who had compiled a neat little handbook of the cathedral, and who furnished anyone who wanted them with "rubbings" of the crusaders' tombs, declared that the "milingtary" never patronised him; "per-

haps," he added, "because I ain't young and pretty," therein decidedly speaking the truth, as he was sixty and deformed. Stothard, the tombstone sculptor, said nothing. He was supposed to be madly in love with Martha Hall, and it was noticed that when the young officers went clanking by his yard he took up his heaviest mallet and punished the stone under treatment fearfully. The hints and remonstrances had but little effect on Robert Hall. Not that he was careless about his daughter. "Happy-go-lucky" in other matters, he would have resented deeply any slight or insult offered to her. But he knew her better than anyone else, knew her passionless, calculating, ambitious nature, and had every confidence in it.

That confidence was not misplaced. Martha was polite to all who visited her as customers; talked and joked with them within bounds, displayed her handiwork, and sold it to the best advantage; taking care always to have ready-money before she parted with it ("Can't think how she does it, 'pon my soul I can't!" was the

cry in barracks. "Screwed two quid out of me for this d—d thing, down on the nail, by Jove! First thing I've had in the place that hasn't been chalked up, give you my word!"); but never allowed any approach to undue familiarity. She was declared by her military customers to be "capital fun;" but it was perfectly understood amongst them that she "wouldn't stand any nonsense." So the shop was filled, and her trade throve, and her enemies and neighbours, however much they might hint and whisper in her detraction, had nothing tangible to narrate against her.

While Martha Hall's popularity was at its fullest height, there came to the dépôt of the hussar regiment — to which he had just been gazetted as cornet—a young gentleman of prepossessing appearance, pleasant manners, good position, and apparently plenty of money. He was well received by his brother-officers, and after being introduced to the various delights which Canterbury affords, he was in due course taken to Martha Hall's shop, and presented to the young

lady therein presiding. It was evident to his companions that the susceptibilities of their new comrade were very keenly aroused at the sight of Miss Hall; and it was no less palpable to Miss Hall herself. She laughingly told her father that night that she had made a fresh conquest; and her father grinned, advised her to set to work on some new texts, with which she could "stick" the new-comer, and repeated his never-failing assertion of thorough confidence in her.

The new-comer, whose name was Derinzy, quickly showed that he was not merely influenced by first impressions. He visited the shop constantly, he bought all the illuminations that Martha Hall could produce; and within a very short time he not merely fell violently in love with her, but told her so; and told her that if she would accept him, he would go to her father, and propose to marry her. To such a suggestion from any other of the score of officers in the habit of frequenting the shop, Martha Hall would have replied by a laugh, or, had it been pressed, by a declaration that she was flattered by the com-

pliment, but that she knew the difference between their stations in life was an insuperable barrier, &c. But she said nothing of this kind to Alexis Derinzy. Why? Because she was in love with him. Perhaps her natural keenness of perception had enabled her to judge between the "spooniness" springing from a desire to bridge-over *ennui*, and to fill up the wearisome hours of a garrison life, which prompted the advances of her other admirers, and the unmistakable passion which this boy betrayed. Perhaps she admired his fair, picturesque face, and well-cut features, and slight form in contradistinction to the more robust and athletic proportions of the other youth then resident in barracks. Perhaps the rumours of the wealth of the Derinzys had reached those calm cloisters, and Martha might have thought that the fact that they were themselves in trade might induce them to overlook what to the scion of any noble house would be an undoubted *mésalliance*. No one knew, for Martha, reticent in everything, was scarcely likely to gossip of her love-affairs; but the fact re-

mained the same, and she loved him. She told him as much, at the same moment that she suggested that the consideration of the marriage question should be deferred for a few months, until he was of age. Mr. Derinzy agreed to this, as he would have agreed to anything his heart's charmer proposed; but stipulated that Martha should consider herself as engaged to him, and that the flirtations with "the other fellows" should be at once discontinued. Martha consented, and acted up both to the spirit and the letter of the agreement; but flirtation with Martha Hall had become such a habit with the officers quartered at Canterbury that it could not be given up all of a sudden; no matter how little the maiden might respond, the gallant youths still frequented the shop, and still paid their court in their usual clumsy but unmistakably marked manner. Alexis Derinzy, worried at this, and also feeling it uncommonly hard that he should not be able to boast of having secured the heart and the proximate chance of the hand of the most sought-after girl in Canterbury, mentioned his engage-

ment, in the strictest confidence, to three or four of his brother-officers, who, under the same seal, mentioned it to three or four more. Thus it happened that in a few days the story came to the ears of the adjutant of the dépôt, who was a great friend of the Derinzy family, and at whose instigation it was that Alexis had been placed in the army.

Captain Branscombe was still a young man, but he had had ripe experience of life, and he knew that it would be as truly useless, under the circumstances, to reason with the love-stricken cornet, as to make application anywhere but to the highest domestic authorities. To these, therefore, he represented the state of affairs—the result of his representation being that Mr. Paul Derinzy, the elder brother of the cornet, came down to Canterbury by the coach the next day, and straightway sought an interview with the Dean. Then Robert Hall was summoned to the diaconal presence, out of which he came swearing strange oaths, and looking very flushed and fierce. Later in the afternoon he was waited upon at h[illegible]

in the precincts by Mr. Paul Derinzy, who had a very stormy ten minutes with Martha, and then made his way to the barracks. Mr. Paul Derinzy remained in Canterbury for two days, during every hour of which, save those which he passed in bed, he was actively employed. The results of the mission did credit to his diplomatic talents. Alexis Derinzy sent in an application for sick-leave, which being promptly granted, he quitted Canterbury without seeing Martha Hall, though he tried hard to do so; and did not rejoin until the regiment, safely arrived from India, was quartered at Hounslow. When Mr. Paul Derinzy was staying in Canterbury, it had been noticed by the neighbours that he had called once or twice on Stothard the stonemason, who has already been described as having been madly in love with Martha Hall; and Stothard had returned the visit at Paul's hotel. In the course of a few weeks after the "London gentleman's" departure, Stothard announced that he had inherited a legacy of a couple of hundred pounds from an old aunt. No one had ever heard any previous mention of

this relative, nor did Stothard enter into any particulars whatever; he did not go to her funeral, and the only mourning he assumed was a crape band to his Sunday beaver. But there was no mistake about the two hundred pounds; that sum was paid in to his credit at the County Bank by their London agent, and he took the pass-book up with him when he went to Robert Hall's to propose for Martha. Folks said he was a fool for his pains—the kindest remarked that she would never stoop to him; the unkindest expressed their contempt for anybody as could take anybody else's leaving. But despite of both, Martha Hall accepted Stothard the stonemason, and they were married.

You must not think that all this little drama had been enacted without its due effect on one of the principal performers. You must not think that Martha Hall had lost Alexis Derinzy without fierce heartburning and deep regret, and intense hatred for those who robbed her of him. She knew that it was not the boy's own fault, she guessed what kind of pressure had been brought

to bear upon him; but she thought he ought to have made a better fight of it. She had loved him, and if he had only been true to her and to their joint cause, they might have been triumphant. In a few months he would have been of age, and then he could have gone up and seen his mother—he was always her favourite—and she would have persuaded his father, and all would have been straight. He always said he hated his brother Paul—how, then, had he suffered himself to be persuaded by him? Ah, other influences must have been brought to bear by Paul Derinzy! Paul Derinzy—how she hated him! She would register that name in her heart; and if ever she came across his path, let him look to himself. When Stothard came with his proposal, she made her acceptance of him conditional on his leaving Canterbury. The money which he had inherited, and the little sum which she had saved, would enable them to commence business afresh somewhere else—say, in London; but she must leave Canterbury. She could not stand the neighbours' looks and remarks, or, what was worse, their pity,

any longer. She must go, she said; she was sick of the place. Robert Hall indorsed his daughter's desire; he was becoming more and more confirmed in his selfishness, and wanted to be allowed to drink himself to death without any ridiculous remonstrances. Stothard agreed,—he would have agreed to anything then,—and they were married; and Stothard bought a business in a London suburb, and for a time—during which time a daughter was born to them—they flourished.

For a time only; then Stothard took to drinking, and late hours; his hand lost its cunning; his customers dropped off one by one; the garnered money had long since been spent, and things looked bad. Stothard drank harder than before, had delirium tremens, and died. His widow could not go back to her old home, for her father had carried out his intention, and drank himself to death very soon after her marriage; and she was too proud to make her appearance among her old acquaintances under her adverse circumstances. As luck would have it, the doctor who had

attended her husband, and had been much struck by the manner in which she had nursed him in his delirium, was physician to a great hospital. He proposed to Mrs. Stothard that she should become a professional nurse, offering her his patronage and recommendation. She agreed, and at once commenced practice in the hospital; but she soon became famous among the physicians and surgeons, and they were anxious to secure her for their private patients, where her services would be well paid. In a few years she had gotten together quite a large connection, and she was in constant demand. The money which she received she applied to giving her daughter a good education. They met but seldom, Mrs. Stothard being so much engaged; but she perceived in her daughter early signs of worldly wisdom, and a disposition to make use of her fellow-creatures, which gladdened her mother's soured spirit. She should be no weak fool, as her mother had been; she should not be made a puppet to be set up and knocked down at a rich man's caprice; she was sharp, she promised to be pretty, and she should

be well-educated. Then, thoroughly warned as to what men were, she should be placed in some good commercial position, and left to see whether she could not contrive to make a rich and respectable marriage for herself.

One day when Mrs. Stothard was at St. Vitus's Hospital—where she was now regarded as a great personage, and where, when she paid an occasional visit, she was taken into the stewards' room, and regaled with the best port-wine,—Dr. Wainwright—who, though not attached to St. Vitus's, had a very great reputation in London, and was considered the leading man in his line—looked into the room. Seeing Mrs. Stothard, he entered, told her he had come expressly, learning she was there, and that he wanted to know if she would undertake a permanent situation. He entered into detail as to the case, mentioned the remuneration, which was very large, and stated that he knew no one who would be so satisfactory in the position; and added, "Indeed, 'if we do not get Mrs. Stothard, I don't know what we shall do,' were the last words I uttered to Mrs. Derinzy."

Mrs. Stothard, albeit a calm and composed woman in general, literally jumped. A quarter of a century rolled up like a mist, and she saw herself selling illuminated scrolls in the little shop in the precincts at Canterbury, and the slim, handsome little cornet leaning over the counter, and devouring her with his bright black eyes.

"What name did you say, sir?" she asked when she recovered herself.

"Derinzy. Odd name, isn't it? De-rin-zy. The lady's husband is a retired military man, and the family consists of themselves and the young lady I was speaking of just now," said the Doctor.

"Is she their daughter?" asked Mrs. Stothard.

"O, no; they have no daughter, only a son, who lives in London. This young lady is their niece, daughter of—why, God bless my soul! you must have heard of him—Mr. Paul Derinzy, the merchant, the millionaire, who died some time ago. Ah! I forgot, though; millionaires—real ones, I mean—are not much in your line," added

Dr. Wainwright with a laugh. "You see plenty who fancy that—"

"O, and so Mr. Paul Derinzy is dead," interrupted Mrs. Stothard; "and this young lady is his daughter? I think, Dr. Wainwright, I must decline the situation."

Decline the situation! Dr. Wainwright had never heard of such a thing, never in the whole course of his professional experience. Decline the situation! Had Mrs. Stothard understood him correctly about the terms? Yes! And she talked of declining the situation after that! And for a permanency too. And he had thought it would have been exactly the thing to suit her. Well, if she would not accept, she must not decline—at once, that was to say. She must think over it; she must indeed.

She did; and accepted it. Partly out of a desire for revenge. She had a long, long pondering over the past; and all the bitterness of bygone years had revived in her heart. She thought that something—luck, she called it; she was but little given to ascribe things to Provi-

dence — had placed her enemies in her hands, and that she might use her power over the man who had given her up, and over the daughter of the man who had compelled him to do so. Partly for money. The salary proposed was very large, and her daughter's education was expensive, and the girl would soon have to be apprenticed to a house of business where a heavy premium must be paid. So she accepted. There was no doubt about her getting the place; Dr. Wainwright's recommendation was all-sufficient, and Mrs. Derinzy was only too anxious to secure her services. Captain Derinzy had forgotten all about Stothard the stonemason, and the two hundred pounds which had been paid to him, even if he ever knew of the transaction. He did not recognise the name, and for the first few minutes after he saw her he did not recognise in the hard-featured, cold, impassive, middle-aged woman his bright boyish love of so many years before. When he did recognise her he started, and seemed as though he would have spoken; but she made him a slight sign, and he waited for an

opportunity of their being alone. When that came, it was Mrs. Stothard who spoke. She told him there was no necessity for ever referring to the past, it was all forgotten by them both; they would never be brought in contact; she knew the position she held in his house, and she should fulfil it; it was better on all accounts that Mrs. Derinzy should be kept in ignorance of their former acquaintance — did he not think so? He did; and as he left her he grinned quietly.

"What the doose did she think?" he said to himself. "Gad! not likely that I should want to renew the acquaintance of an old horse-godmother like that. What a pretty gal she was, too! and how changed! by George, so that her own mother wouldn't know her! Wonder whether I'm as much changed as all that? Often look in the glass and wonder. Different in a man: he don't wear a cap, and that kind of thing; and my hair's lasted wonderful, considerin'. Martha Hall, eh? and those dam' things—text things—that she used to paint in those colours—got some of 'em still, I think, somewhere in my old bullock-

trunk; saw 'em the other day. Martha Hall!—O Lord!"

So Mrs. Stothard accepted office with the Derinzys, and was with them when, shortly afterwards, they gave up the house at Brompton where they had lived so long, and removed to Beachborough. The change affected Mrs. Stothard but very little; it mattered scarcely at all to her where she was; her time was very much employed in her duties, and what little leisure she found she passed in reading, or in writing to her daughter. She knew perfectly well that she was the subject of an immense amount of curiosity in Beachborough village, and of talk at the village tea-tables; but it did not trouble her one whit. She knew that she was said to be a poor relation of the Derinzy family, and she did not discourage the idea. Thinking over the past, and what might have been, she found a kind of grim humour in the combination which suited her thoroughly. They might say what they liked, she thought, so long as her money was regularly paid, and so long as she found herself able to carry out

the one scheme of her life—that of making a good marriage for her daughter Fanny.

Fanny then, under the name of Miss Stafford, was apprenticed to Madame Clarisse the great court milliner, in London, and lived, when she was at home, — and that was not often, poor child! for she slaved like a horse,—in one little room in a house in South Molton-street, a lodging-house kept by an old sister-nurse of Mrs. Stothard's at St. Vitus's, a most respectable motherly woman, who would look after Fanny, and would at once let her mother know if there was "anything wrong." Not that there was any chance of that. Fanny Stafford acted up too strictly to her mother's teaching, and remembered too well the doctrine which had been inculcated in her girlhood, ever to make that mistake. She had been told that to marry a man considerably above her in pecuniary and social position was her mission in life; to that end she might use all her charms, all her arts; but that end must be marriage—nothing less. This she understood, and daily experience made her more and more

impressed with the wisdom of her mother's determination. She had not much heart, she thought; she did not think she had any passion; and she knew that she had keen discrimination and accurate perception of character; so she thought she ought to succeed. Mrs. Stothard was acquainted with the peculiarities of her daughter's character, and thought so too.

At the very time when Captain Derinzy was lying stretched out on the headland overlooking Beachborough Bay, and making those cynical remarks on the place and its population, Mrs. Stothard was preparing to read a letter from her daughter Fanny. It had arrived in the morning; but Mrs. Stothard had been very busy all day, and it was not until the evening that she found time to read it. Her occupation had confined her to the house, so that now, being for a few minutes free, she was glad to escape into the grounds. She chose that portion of the flower-garden which was farthest removed from the side of the house which she principally inhabited; and as she paced up and down the soft turf path

between two rows of espaliers, she took the letter from her pocket and commenced to read it. It was written in a small delicate hand, and Mrs. Stothard had to hold it close to her eyes in the fading light. She read as follows:

"London, Sunday.

"My dear Mother,—You will have been expecting to hear from me for some time, and, indeed, you ought to have had a letter, but the truth is I am so tired and sleepy when I get back here that I am glad to go straight to bed. We are just now in the height of the season, and are so busy that I scarcely ever have time to sit down. I told you, I think, that I was likely to be in the showroom this season. I was right. Madame asked me if I should like to be there, and when I said 'Yes,' she seemed pleased; and I have been there since April. I think I have made myself even more useful than she expected; for many of the customers know me now, and ask to see me in preference to Madame herself. I suppose she does not quite like that, but it is not my

fault. I know I am neat and handy, and that there is no one in the house with so much education or so much manner, and these are both points which are noticed by customers. Nevertheless, I think I am winning my way into Madame's good graces; for when she goes out—and she is now out a great deal, at the French plays, at the Opera, and in private society; you have no notion what an immense amount of reception goes on amongst the French *coiffeurs* and *modistes* in London—she invariably leaves me to see the parcels sent off and the business of the day wound up. She has no forewoman, as I have told you, and I think I might aspire to that important post with reasonable hope of success if I wished it, but I don't.

"No, dear mother; it would give me no pleasure to have my name on as big a brass-plate as Madame Clarisse's, on as handsome a door in as eligible a situation. I should derive no satisfaction even if I could combine her connection with Madame Augustine's, her great rival. (Augustine's *clientèle* is richer than ours, I think, but we have by far the *best* people.) I long sometimes,

when I see a wretched old creature nodding under a wreath when she ought to be concealing her bald pate or her gray hairs under an honest mob-cap, or when I am helping a stout middle-aged matron to struggle into a gown of a style and pattern suitable for her youngest daughter, to throw all my chances of success in business to the winds, and tell the people then under my hands plainly and openly what I think of them. I cannot stand—or rather I could not, were it for a permanence; I can well enough for a time—this wretched ko-tooing existence, this perpetual grinning and curtseying and false-compliment paying, this utter abnegation of one's own opinion, one's own feelings, one's own self! You must not be surprised at these expressions, dear mother, recollecting how you have had me brought up, and how you yourself have always [illegible] a strong desire to better [illegible] by a good marriage to [illegible] superior to this.

"Mo[illegible] do [illegible] that I [illegible] on

servitude, which is galling to me, and of winning a station in life such as you yourself would be proud to see me holding. You remember how you used to talk to me about this when I was much younger, and how I used then to laugh at your earnestness, and tell you your hopes and aspirations were but dreams? I declare now I think there is some chance of their being realised.

"Now you are all impatience, and dying to know all I have to tell! I can see you—I suppose you are not much changed since we last parted; I often wonder—I can see you skimming over the paper in your eager anxiety to get at the details. I will not keep you in suspense, dear Mother—here they are! A month ago, I was returning to Mrs. Gillott's late at night. We had been hard at work until nearly twelve o'clock getting out a large wedding order, and Madame thought it important enough to superintend the packing and sending out of the various things. I had remained till the last, and the church-clock opposite struck twelve as the door closed behind me. The streets were almost deserted; but I had

not gone far before I perceived that a man was following me. I could not make out what kind of a man he was, as he persistently kept in the shade, walking at first on the opposite side of the way, then crossing behind me, but ever constantly following. I knew this from the sound of his footsteps, which echoed in the stillness of the night. When I crossed Bond-street he came abreast of me, and then I saw that he was a common man, in his working dress. I was frightened then, I confess. You don't know what they are sometimes, Mother, these working men. I would sooner meet any gentleman, however loose, any what they call 'gent,' than some of those! It isn't their conduct, it's what they say! They seem to delight in using the most awful language, the foulest terms, to unprotected girls; merely, apparently, for the sake of insulting them. This man was a bad specimen of his class. There was no one near, and he stepped up to my side after we had crossed Bond-street, and said to me things —I don't know what, for I hurried on without looking towards him. I knew well enough what

he said next, he took care that there should be no mistake about that, for he prefaced his remark with a short laugh of scorn and defiance, and then—he made his speech. I was not surprised; no girl compelled to walk alone in London, and especially at night, could be surprised at anything that might be said to her; but I was disgusted and frightened, and tried to run. The man ran by my side—I saw then that he was drunk—and tried to catch hold of me. I was in a dreadful fright, and I suppose I looked so, for a gentleman who was coming out of the hotel at the corner of South Molton-street stepped hurriedly out, and said, 'I beg your pardon—is this person annoying you?' Before I could reply, the man said something—too horrible—about me and himself, and the next moment he was lying in the road; the gentleman had taken him by the collar and flung him there. He got up, and rushed at the gentleman; but by this time a policeman who had seen it all crossed the street, and made him go away. Then the gentleman took off his hat, and begged leave to see me to my door. I

allowed him to do so — it was foolish, I know, Mother, but I was all unnerved, and scarcely knew what I did; and when we arrived at Mrs. Gillott's I thanked him, and bade him good-night. He took off his hat again, and left me at once.

"He found out who I was—how, I don't know —for next day I had a polite note, hoping I had quite recovered from my alarm, expressed in the most gentlemanly manner, and signed 'Paul Douglas.' I have met him several times since, always in the street, and have walked and talked with him. He is always most polite and respectful, but of course professes himself to be madly in love. Yesterday, for the first time, I found out who he is. He has an appointment in a Government office, the 'Stannaries' they call it, and his family live somewhere in the West of England. They are evidently well off, and he, Paul, is what they call a 'swell.' Very good-looking, slight and dark, about five-and-twenty, and always beautifully dressed.

"You don't fear me, Mother? You have sufficient reliance on me to know that I would never

discredit your training. You will want to know whether I am in love with this young man. I think I am—so far. And you need not be afraid. He vows — everything, of course; but he is too much of a gentleman, in the first place, to offer to insult me; and in the second—well, to speak plainly, he knows it would be of no use. Is this the chance that you taught me to look for? I think it is. But we shall soon know. Meanwhile believe in the thorough discretion of your loving daughter FANNY."

Up and down the soft turf path paced Mrs. Stothard in the glorious summer evening, with the open letter in her hand, deep in cogitation. Her head was bent upon her breast, and occasionally raised as she referred to the paper. Suddenly a light gleamed in her face, she hurriedly reperused the letter, folding it so as only to make herself thorough mistress of a certain portion of its contents, and then she smiled a hard grim smile, and said to herself in a hard bitter voice,

"Of course, of course! What an idiot I was not

to see it at once! The mention of the Stannaries Office might have convinced me, if all my senses had not been blunted by my wretched work in this wretched place! Douglas, indeed! Paul Douglas is Paul Derinzy—slight, dark, handsome—none but he! Family in the West of England too—no doubt of it! And in love with my Fan! O, my dear friends, I'll spoil your game yet! I'm so blind. Quiet and seclusion for dear Annette's health; no other reason, O no! Not to keep her out of the way of fortune-hunters, and save her up for our son, O dear no! That shall never be! Our son shall marry my Fan! What is it? 'The sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children.' I never believed much in that sort of thing; but in this instance it really looks as though there were something in it."

## CHAPTER VII.

### FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

THOSE persons to whom London is a home—a place to be lived in all the year round, save on the occasion of the two months' holiday, when one rushes off to the north, or to the sea, or to the Continent, returning with a renewed stock of health and a pleasurable sense of having enjoyed yourself, but with a still more pleasurable sense of being back again in town—are very much amused at a notion prevalent amongst many worthy people who arrive at their own or at a hired house in the month of March, stay there till the end of the month of June, and go away fancying that they know London. Know London! A lifetime's earnest devotion does not suffice for that study, and those people who talk thus have not even the merest smattering of its topography. Their London used to be bounded on the west by

the Knightsbridge Barracks—even now they acknowledge nothing beyond Princes-terrace. On the south-west they have penetrated as far as Onslow-square—the territory beyond that might be full of tiger-lairs and hiding-places for dragons, for all they know about it. Of the suburbs, beyond such knowledge as they derive from an occasional visit to the Star and Garter at Richmond, they know absolutely nothing. They do not know, and it would not make the smallest difference to them if they did, that if, instead of cantering up and down that ghastly, treeless, sun-scorched mile of gravel, the Row, they chose to turn their horses' heads north-westward, they could find shade in the green Willesden lanes and air on the breezy Hendon heights. They do not know, that within a very short distance of Hyde-park there are shady lanes half-hidden in greenery, dotted here and there with quaint old-fashioned houses standing in the midst of large grounds —some with gardens sloping away towards the river; others with enormous trees overhanging them, blotting-out all view or vista; and others

again with such an expanse of what the auctioneers are pleased to term "park-like grounds" visible from their windows, that you would have no idea of the immediate proximity of London, save for the never-varying presence of the smoke-wreath hanging over the horizon, and the never-ceasing, save on Sundays, dull rumble of distant traffic, which grinds on the ear like the monotonous surging of the waves upon the shore.

In one of these metropolitan suburbs, no matter which, stood and stands the house which at the period of our story was George Wainwright's home, the residence of his father, Dr. Wainwright. It was a big, long, rambling, red-faced old house, with an enormous number of rooms, some large and some small, standing in the midst of a large garden. Tradition said that it had been a favourite residence of Cromwell's; but it was generally believed, and the belief was not ill-founded, that it had been given by the Lord Protector to the husband of his favourite daughter, and that he himself had frequently been in the habit of staying there. At the end of the first

quarter of the present century it had a very different occupant from the grim old Ironsides leader, being rented by the Countess Della Crusca, the wittiest, the most beautiful, the most extravagant, the most fascinating woman of her day. Old Knaves of Clubs still *raffolent* about the Della Crusca, her eyes and her poems, her bust and her repartees. She had a husband?—O yes! the Count Della Crusca, ex-officer of Bersaglieri and one of the first naturalists of his day, corresponding member of all the principal European societies, and perfectly devoted to his favourite pursuit; so devoted, that he was invariably away in some distant foreign country, engaged in hunting for specimens. The Countess was an Englishwoman, daughter of Captain Ramus, half-pay, educated at a convent in Paris, under the guidance of her maternal aunt Miss Coghlan, of Letterkenney in Ireland. Immediately on issuing from the convent she eloped with Count Della Crusca, whose acquaintance she had made in a casual manner in the *coupé* of one of the diligences belonging to Messrs. Lafitte, Caillard, et Cie. A very short

time served to prove to them that they had no tastes in common. Madame la Comtesse did not care for natural history, which the Count loved, and she did care for England, which the Count loathed. So he went his way, in pursuit of specimens, and she went hers to England. She arrived in London, and Marston-moor House being to let, she took it.

Some of us are yet alive who recollect the little saccharine poems, the plaintive little sonnets, the — well, yes, to speak the truth — the washy three-volume novels which were composed in that sturdy old building and dated thence. Sturdy outside, but lovely within. Such furniture: white satin and gold, black satin and red trimming; such pictures, and statues, and busts; such looking-glasses let into the walls at every conceivable place; such hanging boskets and ormolu clocks, and Dresden and Sèvres china; such Chinese fans and Indian screens, and Turkish yataghans and Malay creeses; such books — at least, such bindings; such a satin-wood desk, at which the Countess penned her inspirations; such a solemn-sounding library clock, which had be-

longed to Marie Antoinette; such lion-skins and leopard-skins for rugs; such despatch-boxes with the Della Cruscan coronet and cipher; such waste-paper baskets always littered with proof-sheets! The garden! never was anything seen like that! It was not much more than half an acre, but Smiff, the great landscape gardener, made it look more like a square mile. Delightfully rustic and English here, quaintly Dutch there, Italian terraced a little lower down, small avenue, vista broken by the fountain; might be a thousand miles away from London, so every one said. Every one said so, because every one came there. Who was every one? Well, the Grand-Duke of Schweinerei was some one, at all events. Ex-Grand-Duke I should have said, recollecting that some years before, the people of Schweinerei, although by no means a strait-laced people, grew so disgusted at the "goings-on" of their reigning potentate, that they rose in revolt, and incontinently kicked him out. Then he came to England, where he has remained ever since, dwelling in a big house, and occupying his spare time with

fighting newspapers for libelling him in a very blackguard and un-English manner. His highness is an elderly, short, fat man, with admirably-fitting wig and whiskers of the Tyrian purple. He has dull bleary eyes, pendulous cheeks, and a great fat double chin. He is covered all over with diamonds: his studs are diamonds; he wears a butterfly diamond brooch on the knot of his white cravat; his waistcoat-buttons are diamonds; his sleeve-links are diamonds; and he resembles the old woman of Banbury Cross in having (diamond) rings on his fingers, and probably, for all the historian knows to the contrary, on his toes.

Who else came there? A tall, thin, dark man, with a long face like a sheep's head, a full dull eye, a long nose, a very long upper lip, and a retreating chin. Prince Bernadotte of the Lipari Isles, also an exile, but one who has since been recalled to his kingdom. Nobody thought much of Prince Bernadotte in those days. He lived in cheap chambers in London, and used to play billiards with *coiffeurs* and *agents de change* and *commis voyageurs* from the

hotels in Leicester-square; and who went into very little English society, where he always sa silent and reserved, and where they thought ver little of him. He must have been marvellousl misunderstood then, or must have grown int quite a different kind of man when he sat smokin his cigar with his feet on the fender in the Elysé and to all inquiries made but the one repl "*Qu'on exécute mes ordres!*"—those "ordres being fulfilled in the massacre of the Boulevards.

Who else? *Savans*, philosophers, barristers poets, newspaper-writers, novelists, caricaturists eminent physicians and surgeons, fiddlers, fo eigners, anybody who had done anything whic had given him the merest temporary notoriet was welcome, so long as he came at the time And they never failed to do that. The societ was so delightful, the welcome was so warm, th eating and drinking were so good, that there wa never any chance of an invitation to Marston moor House being refused. Sourkraut, the grea cynical philosopher, who sneered himself into fam and fortune, owed a great deal to the Countes

Della Crusca; for her house was the first at which he met titled people whom he could beslaver to their faces and ridicule behind their backs, and thus make capital out of them in two senses. Thither came Fermez, the Opera *impresario*, driving down a couple of lords in his phaeton; and Tom Gilks, the scene-painter of Covent-garden, who arrived per omnibus; and Whiston, who had just written that tremendous pamphlet on the religious controversy of the day; and Rupert Robinson, who had sat up all the previous night to finish his burlesque, and who was so enchanted with the personal appearance of the Grand-Duke of Schweinerei, that he wanted to carry him off bodily—rings, diamonds, wig, whiskers, and all—to Madame Tussaud's Exhibition. Dinners and balls, conversazioni and fêtes—with the garden illuminated with Italian lamps and supper served in extemporised pavilions — two royal dukes, in addition to standard celebrities, and foreign princes in town for the season—without end.

"Vain transitory splendour! could not all
Retain the tott'ring mansion from its fall?"

Apparently not. One morning the servants at Marston-moor House got up, to find their mistress had risen before them, or rather had not been to bed at all, having decamped during the night with the plate and all the portable valuables, and left an enormous army of creditors behind her. There was weeping and wailing round the neighbourhood for months; but tears and outcries did not pay the defrauded tradespeople, and they never had any money. Nobody ever knew who received the money realised by the sale of the furniture, &c., though that ought to have been something considerable, for there never was a sale so tremendously attended, or at which things fetched such high prices. All the ladies of high rank who combined frightful stupidity with rigid virtue, and who would as soon have thought of walking into Tophet as of crossing Madame Della Crusca's threshold, rushed to Marston-moor House so soon as its proprietress had fled, and bought eagerly at the sale. The large looking-glass which formed the back of the alcove in which Madame Della Crusca's bed was placed now figures in the bou-

doir, or, as it is generally called, the work-room, of the Countess of Textborough, and is scarcely so happy in its reflections as in former days. The satin-wood desk fell to the nod of Mrs. Quisby, who used to follow the Queen's hounds in a deep-pink jacket and a short skirt, and who now holds forth on Sunday afternoons at the infant schools in Bodger's-buildings Mayfair, and is especially hard on the Scarlet Woman. Many of the old *habitués* attended, and bought well-remembered scraps for *souvenirs*. Old Sourkraut's melancholy mug was seen in the first rank of Mr. Hammerdown's audience; and the genial old cynic wept real tears over the break-up of the establishment, and then, at a cheap rate, bought a service of dinner-plate, off which he subsequently consumed hecatombs of toads in honour of the great people who patronised his dinners. Finally everything, down to the kitchen pots and pans, the stable-buckets and the gardeners' implements, were cleared off, and a big painted board frowned in the great courtyard, informing the British public that that eligible mansion was to let.

Not for long did that black-and-white board blossom in that flinty soil. Within three weeks of the sale a rumour ran through London that an *al-fresco* place of entertainment on a magnificent scale was about to be opened on what had been the Della-Cruscan property, and that Wuff, the great Wuff, the most enterprising man of his day, was at the back of it. Straightway the board was pulled down, and an army of painters, and decorators, and plumbers, and builders, and Irish gentlemen in flannel jackets, and Italian gentlemen in slouch wideawakes and paint-stained gaberdines, took possession of the place. Big rooms were converted into supper- and dining-rooms, and small rooms into *cabinets particuliers;* a row of supper-boxes on the old Vauxhall pattern sprang up in the grounds, which moreover were tastefully planted with gas-lamps, with plaster-of-paris statues, with two or three sham fountains, and with grottoes made of slag and shiny-faced bricks. Then, on an Easter Monday, the place was opened with a ballet, with dancing on the circular platform, with Signor Simioso's perform-

ing monkeys, and with a grand display of fireworks. Very good, all this; but somehow it didn't draw. The great Wuff did all he could—sent an enormous power of legs into the ballet; engaged the most excruciatingly funny comic singers; put silver rosettes into the button-holes and silver-gilt wands into the hands of all the masters of the ceremonies on the circular platform; and had Guffino il Diavolo flying from the top of the pasteboard Leaning Tower of Pisa into the canvas Lake of Geneva, down a wire, with a squib in his cap, and one in each of his heels—and yet the public would not come. The great Wuff tried it for two seasons, and then gave it up in despair.

Up went the black-and-white board again; to be taken down at the bidding of Mrs. Trimmer, who, having a very good boarding-school for young ladies at Highgate, thought she might increase her connection by establishing herself in a more eligible neighbourhood. The board had been up so long, that the proprietor of the house was willing, not merely to take a reduced rent, but to pull up the gas-lamps, and pull down the supper-

boxes, and restore the garden, not indeed to its original state of beauty, but to decency and order. The rooms were re-papered (it must be owned that Wuff's taste in decoration had been loud), and the name of the house changed from Marston-moor to Cornelia. Then Mrs. Trimmer took possession, and brought her young friends with her, and they throve and multiplied exceedingly; and all went well until Mrs. Trimmer died, and there was no one to carry on the business; and the board went up, and remained up longer than ever.

No one knew exactly when or how the house was taken again. The proprietor, hoping to get another school-keeper for a tenant, the house being too large for ordinary domestic purposes, had bought Mrs. Trimmer's furniture—the iron bedsteads and school-fittings—for a song, and had placed an old woman in charge. One day this old woman put her luggage, consisting of a blue bundle, and herself into a cab, and went away. A few carpenters had arrived from town in the morning, and had occupied themselves in fitting

iron bars to the interior of some of the windows. During the greater portion of that night carriages were heard rolling up the lane in which the back entrance to the house was situated, and the next day smoke was seen issuing from the chimneys; a big brass plate with the name of "Dr. Bulph" was screwed on to the iron gates of the carriage-drive, and two or three strong-built men were noticed going in and out of the premises. Gradually it became known that Dr. Bulph was a physician celebrated for his treatment of the insane, a "mad-doctor," as the neighbours called him; and women and children used to skurry past the old red garden-walls as though they thought the inmates were climbing over to get at them. But the house was so thoroughly well-conducted, so quietly and with such excellent discipline, that people soon thought nothing of it, any more than of any other of the big mansions in the neighbourhood; and when Dr. Bulph retired, and Dr. Wainwright succeeded him, the door-plate had actually been changed for some days before the neighbours noticed it.

Dr. Wainwright made many changes in the establishment. He was a man of great fame for several specialties, and was constantly being called away to patients in the country. He considerably enlarged the old house, and brought to it a better and wealthier class of patients, who were attended, under his supervision, by two resident surgeons. Dr. Wainwright did not live in the house. In addition to his practice he worked very hard with his pen, contributing largely to the principal medical scientific reviews and journals, and corresponding with many continental *savans*. For all this work he required solitude and silence; and, as he was a widower, he was able to enjoy both in a set of chambers in the Albany, where he could go in and out as he liked, and where no unwelcome visitor could get at him. He had consulting-rooms in Grosvenor-square; and when in town, was to be found there between ten and one; but after those hours it was impossible to know where to catch him.

But George Wainwright lived at the old house, or rather in an outbuilding in the grounds, sole

remainder of Mr. Wuff's erections; which had been converted to his use, and which yielded him a large, high-roofed, roomy studio and a capital bedroom, both on the ground floor. The studio was no misnomer for the living-room; for, in addition to his Civil-Service work, George followed Art with deep and earnest devotion, and was known and recognised as one of the best amateur painters of the day. Men whose names stood very high in the art-world were his friends; and on winter nights the studio would be filled with members of that pleasant Bohemian society, discussing their craft and its members and such cognate subjects. George was a great reader also, and had a goodly store of books littering the tables or ranged on common shelves, disputing possession of the walls with choice bits of his friends' painting or half-finished attempts of his own. In the middle of the room stood a quaintly-carved old black-oak desk, ink-blotted and penknife-hacked, with some pages of manuscript and some slips of proof lying on it—for George, who had been educated in Germany, was in the habit of

contributing essays on abstruse questions of German philosophy and metaphysics to a monthly review of very portentous weight—and in the corner was a cabinet piano, covered with loose leaves of music, scraps from oratorios, *studenten-lieden*, bits of Bach and Glück, glees of Purcell and Arne, and even ballads by Claribel. Some of George's painter friends had formed themselves into a singing-club and sang very sweetly; and the greatest treat that could be offered to the inmates of the house was these fellows' musical performances. The young swells of the Stannaries Office wondered why George Wainwright never was seen at casino, singing and supper-houses, or other of those resorts which they specially affected. They looked upon him as somewhat of a fogey, and could not understand what a bright, genial, jolly fellow like Paul Derinzy could see to like in him. He was kind and good-natured and all that, they owned, as indeed they had often proved by loans of "sovs" and "fivers," when the end of the quarter had left them dry; but he was an uncomfortable sort of chap, they said, and was always by himself.

He was by himself the evening of the day after that on which he had seen Paul Derinzy walking with Daisy in Kensington-gardens. He had had a light dinner at his club, and thence walked straight away home, where, on his arrival at his den, he had lit a big pipe and thrown himself into an easy-chair, and sat watching the blue smoke curling away above his head, and pondering over the present and the future of his friend. George Wainwright had a stronger feeling than mere liking for Paul; there was a touch of romance in the regard which the good-looking, bright, easy-going young man had aroused in his steady, sober, practical senior. George was too much a man of the world to thrill with horror because he had seen his friend in the company of a pretty girl, and come across what was evidently a lovers' meeting. But his knowledge of Paul's character was large and well-founded; in the mere glance which he had got of the pair as they stood together in the act of saying adieu, he had caught an expression in his friend's face which intuitively led him to feel that the woman who could call up

such a look of intense earnest devotion was no mere passing light-o'-love; and as George thought over the scene, and reproduced it, time after time, from the storehouse of his memory, he puffed fiercer blasts from his pipe, and shook his head in an unsettled, not to say desponding, manner.

While he was thus occupied he heard steps on the gravel walk outside, then a tap at the door. Opening it, Paul Derinzy stood before him.

"Just the man I was thinking about, and come exactly in the nick of time! *Alma quies optator, veni!* Not that you can be called *alma quies*, you restless bird of the night! What's the matter? what are you making signs about?" asked George.

"That idiot Billy Dunlop is with me," replied Paul, grinning; "he's doing some of his pantomime nonsense outside;" and, indeed, George Wainwright, peering out into the darkness, could make out a stout figure approaching with cautious gestures, which, when it emerged into the lamplight, proved to be Mr. Dunlop.

"Hallo, Billy! what are you at? Come in, man; light a pipe, and be happy."

But Mr. Dunlop, true to his character of comic man, did not enter the room quietly, but came in with a little rush, and then, his knees knocking together in simulated abject terror, asked,

"Am I safe? Can none of them get at me?"

"None of whom?"

"None of the patients. I was in such a fright coming up that garden, I could scarcely speak. I thought I saw eyes behind every laurustinus; and—I suppose the staff of keepers is adequate, in case any of 'em *should* prove rampagious?"

"O, yes, it's all right. Have you never been here before?"

"Never, sir; and I don't think, provided I get safe away this time, that I'm ever likely to come again."

"You're complimentary; but now you are here, sit down and have a drink. Spirits there in that stand, soda-water here in the window-seat, ice in that refrigerator by the door. Or stay, let me make you the new Yankee drink that has just

come up—a cobbler. There are plenty of straws somewhere about."

"I should think so," said Billy in a stage-whisper to Paul. "He gets 'em out of the patients' heads. Lunatics always stick straws in their heads, vide the drama *passim*. I say, Wainwright, while you're mixing the grog, may I run out and have a look at the night-watch?"

"The what?" asked George, raising his head.

"The night-watch, you know;" and Mr. Dunlop sat down at the piano, squared his elbows, contorted his face, and with much ludicrous exaggeration burst forth:

'Hush-sh-sh-sh! 'tis the NIGHT WATCH!! he gy-ards
my lonely cell!'

Now, don't you say that he doesn't, you know, because I've Mr. Henry Russell's authority that he does. So produce your night-watch!"

"Don't make such a row, Billy!" cried Paul; "there's no night-watch, or anything else of the sort."

"What! do you mean to say that I did not

see her dancing in the hall? that I am not cold, bitter cold? that his glimmering lamp no more I see? and that no, no, by hav-vens, I am not ma-a-ad!" With these words, uttered in the wildest tones, Mr. Dunlop cast himself at full length on the sofa, whence arising immediately with a placid countenance, he said, "Gentlemen, if you wish thus to uproot and destroy the tenderest associations of childhood, I shall be happy, when I have finished my drink, to wish you a good-evening, and return home."

"I can't think what the deuce you came for," said Paul, with a smile. "He looked in at the club where I was dining, hoping to meet you, and where I heard you had been and gone, and asked me whether I wasn't going to evening service. When I told him 'yes,' he said he would come with me; and all the way along he has done nothing but growl at the pace I was walking, and the length of the way."

"Don't mind me, Mr. Wainwright," said Billy politely; "pray let the gentleman go on. I am not the Stannaries Stag, sir, and I never laid

claim to the title; consequently it's no degradation to me to avow that I can't keep on heeling and toeing it at the rate of seven miles an hour for long. As it happens, I have a friend in the neighbourhood, a fisherman, who has managed to combine a snack-bend with a Kirby hook in a manner which he assures me—Pardon me, dear sirs, those imbecile grins remind me that I am speaking to men who don't know a stone-fly from a gentle; that I have been throwing my—I needn't finish the sentence. I have finished the drink. Mr. Wainwright, have the goodness to see me off the premises, and, in the words of the distraught Ophelia—to whom, by the way, I daresay your talented father would have been called in, had he happened to live in Denmark at the time—'let out the maid, who'—Good-night."

When George Wainwright returned, alone, he found Paul, who had lighted a cigar, walking up and down the room, his hands plunged in his pockets, his chin down upon his chest. George went up to him, and putting his hand affectionately on his shoulder, said,

"What brought you down here to-night, young un? The last rats must have deserted the sinking ship of Fashion and Season when you clear out of it to come down to Diogenes in his tub. Not but that I'm delighted to see you; all I want to know is why?"

"I was nervous and restless, George; a little tired of fools and frippery, and—and myself. I wanted you to blow a little of the ozone of common-sense into me, you know!"

"O, yes, I know," said George Wainwright; but he uttered the words in such deep solemn tones, that Paul turned upon him suddenly, saying,

"You know? Well, what do you know?"

"I know why you could not play tennis, or come to the Oval, or walk out to Hendon with me yesterday afternoon."

"The deuce you do! And why?"

"For a very sufficient reason to a young fellow of five-and-twenty!" said George, with a rather melancholy grin. "Look here, Paul; I don't think you'll imagine I'm a spy, or a med-

dling impertinent busybody, and I'm sure you'll believe it was by the merest accident that I was crossing Kensington-gardens last evening, and there saw a friend of mine in deep conversation with a very handsome young lady."

"The deuce you did!" cried Paul, turning very red. "What then?"

"Ah!" said George, filling his pipe, "that's exactly the point—what then!"

"What a provoking old beggar you are! Why do you echo me? Why don't you go on?"

"It's for you to go on, my boy! What are your relations—or what are they to be—with this handsome girl?"

"She is handsome, is she not?"

"Beautiful!"

"'Gad! she must be to strike fire out of an old flint like you, George!" cried Paul. "What are my relations with her? Strictly proper, I give you my word."

"And you intend to marry her?"

"How the man jumps at an idea! Well, no; I don't know at all that I intend that."

"Not the — the other thing, Paul? No; you're, to say the least of it, too much of a gentleman. You don't intend that?"

"I don't intend anything, I tell you. Can't a man talk to a pretty girl without 'intention'?"

"I don't know, Paul. I'm quite incompetent to pronounce any opinion on such matters; only —only see here: I look on you as on a younger brother, and, prompted by my regard for you, I may say many things which you may dislike."

"Well, say away, old George; you won't offend me."

"Well then, if this is a good honest girl, and you don't intend to marry her, you ought not to be meeting her, and walking with her, and leading her to believe that she will attain to a position through you which she never would otherwise; and if she isn't an honest girl, you ought never to have spoken to her."

Paul Derinzy laughed, the quiet easy chuckle of a man of the world, as he replied to his simple senior:

"She *is* a good, honest girl, no doubt of that.

But suppose the question of marriage had never risen between us, and she still liked to meet me and to walk with me, what then? In the gravel paths of Kensington-gardens Pamela herself might have strolled with Captain Lovelace himself without fear. Why should not I with—with this young lady?"

"Because, though you don't know it, you're deceiving yourself and deceiving her; because the whole thing is incongruous and won't fit, however you may try to make it do so; because it's wrong, however much you may slur it over. Look here, Paul: suppose, just for the sake of argument, that you wanted to marry this girl—you're as weak as water, and there's no accounting for what you might wish—you know your people would oppose it in the very strongest way, and—"

"O, if I chose it, my 'people,' as you call them, must have it, or leave it alone, which would be quite immaterial to me."

"Yes, yes, no doubt; but still—"

"Look here, George; let's bring this question to a practical issue. I'm ten times more

a man of the world than you, though you are an old fogey, and clever and sensible and all that. What you're aiming at is, that I must give up this girl. Well then, shortly, I won't!"

"And why won't you?"

"For a reason that you can't understand, you old mole, burrowed down here under your paintings, and your fugues, and your dreary old German philosophers—because I love her; because I think of her from morning till night, and from night till morning again; because her bright face and her gay creamy skin come between me and those beastly old minutes and memoranda that we have to write at the shop; and when I'm lying awake in Hanover-street, or even sitting surrounded by a lot of gabbling idiots in the smoking-room of the club, I can see her gray eyes looking at me, and—"

"O Lord!" said George Wainwright with a piteous smile; "I had no idea I'd let myself in for this!"

"You have, my dear old George, and for a lot more at a future time. Just now I came out

to you because I was horribly restless, and Billy fastened himself on to me at the club, and I could not shake him off. But I want to talk to you about it seriously, George—seriously, you understand?"

"Whenever you like, Paul; but I expect you'll only get one scrap of advice out of me, repeated, as I fear, *ad nauseam*."

"And that is?"

"Give her up! give her up! give her up! Cato's powers of iteration in the *delenda est Carthago* business will prove weak as compared to mine in this."

"You'll find me stubborn, George."

"Buffon gives stubbornness as a characteristic of your class, Paul. Good-night, old man."

"Good-night, God bless you! To-morrow as per usual, I suppose?" and he was gone.

Alone once more, George Wainwright threw himself again into the easy-chair and renewed his pipe; but he shook his head more than ever, and when he did speak, it was only to mutter to himself, "Worse than I thought! Don't see

the way out of that. Must look into this, and take care that Paul does not make a fool of himself."

When the clock struck midnight, he rose, yawned, stretched, and seemed more than half inclined to turn towards his cosy bedroom, which opened from the studio; but he shook himself together, and saying, "Poor dear, she would not sleep if I did not say good-night to her, I suppose!" lit a lamp, and took his way across the garden to the house.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CORRIDOR NO. 4.

Across the garden, and through an iron gate which he unlocked, and which itself formed part of a railing shutting off one wing of the house from the rest and from the grounds, George Wainwright walked; then up a short flight of steps, topped by a heavy door, which he also unlocked with a master key which he took from his pocket, and which closed behind him with a heavy clang; through a short stone passage, in a room leading off which, immediately inside the door—a bright snug cheerful little room, with a handful of fire alight in the grate, and the gas burning brightly over the mantelpiece, and a tea-tray and appurtenances brightly shining on the table—was a young woman—handsome, black-eyed, and rosy-cheeked, tall, strongly built, and neatly dressed in a close-fitting dark-gray gown—who started

up at the sound of the approaching footsteps, and presented herself at the door.

"You on duty, Miss Marshall?" said George, with a smile and a bow.

"Yes, Mr. George, it's my night-turn again; comes round quicker than one thinks for, or than one hopes for, indeed! Going to see your sweetheart as usual, Mr. George?"

"Yes; I don't often miss; never, indeed, when I'm at home."

"Ah, if all other men were as thoughtful and as kind and as true to their sweethearts as you are to yours, there would be less need for these sort of houses in the world, Mr. George," said the young woman, with a somewhat scornful toss of her head.

"Come, come, Miss Marshall," cried George laughingly, "you've no occasion to talk in that manner, I'm sure. Besides, I might retort, and say that if all women were as kind and as loving and as pleased to see their sweethearts as mine is to see me, if they remained true to them for as many years as mine has remained true to me, if

they were as patient and as quiet—yes, and I think as silent—as mine is, they would have a greater chance of retaining men's affections."

"Poor dear madame!" said Miss Marshall. "Ah, you don't see many like her!"

"I never saw one," said George. "But she will be keeping awake on the chance of my coming to say good-night to her."

And with another smile and bow, he passed on.

First down another and a longer stone passage, the doors leading from either side of which were wide open, showing bath-rooms, kitchens, and other domestic penetralia; then up a flight of stairs to a landing covered with cocoa-nut matting, and giving on to a long corridor, on the stone-coloured wall of which was painted in large black letters, "Corridor No. 4." Closed doors here—doors of dormitories, where the inmates were shut in for the night: some tossing on their dream-haunted pillows; some haply—God knows—enjoying a mental rest as soft and sweet as the slumber which enchained them, borne away to

the bygone days, when they thought and felt and knew, ere the brain was distraught, and the memory snapped, and the mind either warped or void. All was perfectly quiet as George passed along, stopping at length before a door which was closed but not locked, and at which he tapped lightly. Lightly, but with a sound which was quickly heard, for a soft voice cried immediately "*Entrez!*" and he opened the door, and went in.

It was a pretty little room, considerably too lofty for its breadth—a long narrow slip of a place, which some people with pleasant development of mortuary tendencies might have rendered unpleasantly like a grave. But it was tricked out with a pretty wall-paper, all rosebuds and green leaves; some good photographs of foreign scenery were framed on the walls; a wooden Swiss peasant with a clock-face let into the centre of his waistcoat, and its works ticking and running and whirring away in the centre of his anatomy, stood on the mantelpiece; the fire-place was filled up with bright-gilded shavings; and the bed, instead of being the mere ordinary iron stump bedstead to

be found in other dormitories of the house, was gay with white hangings, and blue bows tastefully disposed here and there.

On it lay a woman, who had risen on her elbow at George's knock, and who remained in the same attitude, awaiting his approach. A woman of small stature evidently, and delicately made, with small well-cut features and small bones. Her hair, as snow-white as the cap under which it was looped up, contrasted oddly with the deep ruddy bronze of her complexion; such bronze as, travelling south, you first begin to notice among the Lyonnaises, and afterwards find so common along the shores of the Mediterranean. But Time, though he had changed the colour of her locks—and to be so very white now, they must necessarily have been raven black before—had failed in dimming the lustre of her marvellous eyes; they remained large, and dark, and appealing, as they must have been in earliest youth. Full of liquid love and kindliness were they too, as they beamed a welcome to George, a welcome seconded by her outstretched hand,

which rested on his head as he bent down beside her.

"You are late, George," she said, with the faintest foreign accent; "but I had not given you up."

"No, *maman*, you know better than that; you know that whenever I am at home, I never think of going to bed without saying good-night to *maman*. But I am late, dear; I have had friends sitting with me, and they have only just gone."

"Friends, eh? Ah, that must be odd to see friends. And you took them for a *promenade* on the Lac, and you— *Ah, bah! quelle enfantillage!* your friends were men, of course. Some of those who sing so sweetly sometimes? No! but still men? Ah, no one else has ever come here."

"No one else, *maman?*"

"See, George, come closer. *She* has not come?"

"No, *maman*," said the young man, rising, and regarding her with a look of genuine affection and pity. "No, *maman*, not yet."

"Ah, not yet,—always not yet," she said, letting her elbow relax, and falling back in the bed,—"always not yet!" And she covered her face with her hands, removing them after a few minutes to say, "But she will come? she will come?"

"O yes, dear, let us trust so," said George quietly.

She looked at him, first earnestly, then wistfully, for several minutes; then she dried the tears which, unseen by him, almost unknown to her, had been trickling down her face, and said in a trembling voice, "Good-night, my boy!"

"Good-night, *maman*. God bless you!"

And he bent over her, and kissed her forehead.

"*Dieu me bénisse!*" she said, with a half-smile. "In time, George, when *she* comes back! Meantime, *Dieu te bénisse*, my son!"

He bent his head again, and she encircled it with her arms, brushed each of his cheeks with her lips, and kissed his hand; then murmuring, "Good-night," sank back on her pillow.

George took up his lamp, and crept silently from the room, and down the corridor, down the stairs, and towards the outer door. As he passed Miss Marshall's room he looked in, and saw her, bright, brisk, and cheerful, sitting at her needle-work, an epitome of neatness and propriety. George could not refrain from stopping in his progress, and saying,

"You don't look much like a 'keeper,' Miss Marshall. I had a friend with me to-night, who laughingly asked me to show him the night-watch of such places as these, of whom he had read in songs and novels. I think he would have been rather astonished if I had brought him across the garden and introduced him to you."

"O, they're not much 'count, those kind of trash, I think, Mr. George," said Miss Marshall, who was eminently practical. "I read about 'em often enough when I was a nursery-governess, and before I came into the profession. I daresay he expected to see a man with big whiskers, with a sword and a brace of pistols in his belt, and perhaps two big dogs following him up and down

the passages! At least, I know that used to be my idea.—You found Madame Vaughan all well and quiet and comfortable, Mr. George? And left her so, no doubt?"

"O, yes. She was just the same as usual, poor dear!"

"O, poor dear indeed! If they were all like her, one need not grumble about one's life here. There never was such a sweet creature. I'm sure if one-half of the sane women, the sensible creatures who expect one to possess all the cardinal virtues and to look after four of their brats for sixteen pounds a-year, were anything like as nice, or as sensible, or as sane, for the matter of that, as Madame Vaughan, the world would be a much nicer place to live in. She expected you, I suppose, sir?"

George Wainwright knew perfectly that Miss Marshall was, as the phrase is, "making conversation;" that she cared little about the patient whose state she was discussing; cared probably less about him. But he knew also that in the discharge of her duty she had to sit up all night,

until relieved by one of the day-nurses at six o'clock in the morning; that she naturally enough grasped at any chance of making a portion, however small, of this time pass more pleasantly, with somebody to look at and somebody's voice to listen to. And she was a pretty girl and a good girl, and he was not particularly tired and was particularly good-natured; so he thought he would stop and chat with her for a few minutes.

"O, yes, she expected me," he said; "so I should have been horribly sorry if I had neglected to go to her. One must be selfish indeed to deny any one so much pleasure when it can be afforded by merely stepping across the garden."

"Did she speak of the usual subject, sir?"

"The child? O, yes; asked if any one had come, as usual; and when I answered her, felt sure that her child would come speedily."

"I suppose there's no foundation for that idea of hers?"

"That the child will come, or, indeed, so far as we know, that she ever had a child, is, I

imagine, the merest hallucination. At all events, from the number of years she has been here, her child, if she ever had one, must be a tolerably well-grown young lady, and not likely to be recognisable by, or to recognise, her, poor thing!"

"Yes, indeed, Mr. George; and it's odd that of all our ladies, with the exception of poor Mrs. Stoneycroft, who, I imagine, is just kept here out of the Doctor's kindness and charity, Madame is the only one who never has any friends come to see her."

"She has outlived all her friends; that is to say, she has outlived their recollection of her. Nothing so easily forgotten as the trace of people we once knew, but who can no longer be of use to us, or administer to our vanity, our pleasure, or our amusement. I was at a cemetery the other day, and saw there an enormous and magnificent tombstone which a man had ordered to be erected over his wife; but before the order had been executed, the man had married again, declined to pay for his extravagance in mortuary sculpture, and contented himself with a simple

headstone. And the gardener told me that it is very seldom that the floral graves are kept up beyond the first twelve months. So it is not likely that in this, which, to such poor creatures as Madame Vaughan, is not much better than a living tomb, the occupants should be held in any long remembrance."

"I'm sure it's very kind of the Doctor to take such care of these poor creatures, Mr. George; more especially when he's not paid for it."

"That is not the case with Madame Vaughan. I think—in fact, I'm sure—she was one of the patients of my father's predecessor, and was made over to him on the transfer of the business; but though she has no friends to come and see her, the sum for her maintenance here is regularly discharged by a firm of solicitors who have money in trust for the purpose, and by whom it has been paid from the first."

"And is there nothing known of her history, Mr. George; who were her friends, or where she came from?"

"Nothing now. Dr. Bulph, I suppose, had

some sort of information; but he was an odd man, and so long as his half-yearly bills were paid, did not trouble himself much further, I fancy."

"Lord, what a life!" said Miss Marshall, casting a sidelong glance at the little looking-glass over the mantelpiece, and smoothing her hair. "And it will end here, I suppose? The Doctor does not think she will ever be cured, Mr. George?"

"No, indeed!" said George, shaking his head. "And if she were, what would become of her? She has been here for nearly twenty years, and the outer world would be as strange and as impossible to her as it was to the released prisoner of the Bastille, who prayed to be taken back to his dungeon."

"Ah, well, I should pray to be taken to my grave," said the practical Miss Marshall, "if I thought no one cared for me—"

"Ah, now you're talking of an impossibility, Miss Marshall," said George, rising. "If ever I have a necessity to expose the absurdity of that

saying which advances the necessity for 'beauty sleep,' I shall bring you forward as my example; for you're never in bed by midnight, and are often up all night; and yet I should like to see any one who could rival you in briskness or freshness. Good-night, Miss Marshall."

"Good-night, Mr. George."

As he rose, shook hands, and taking up his lamp made his way across the garden, the nurse looked after him with a pleased expression, and said to herself,

"What a nice young man that is!—so pleasant and kind! Nice-looking too, though a trifle old-fashioned and heavy; not like—ah, well, never mind. But much too good to mope away his life in this wretched old place, anyhow."

And when George reached his rooms he smiled to himself, and said,

"Well, if that little talk, and those little compliments, have the result of making Miss Marshall show any extra amount of kindness to my poor *maman*, my time will not have been ill bestowed."

George Wainwright was tolerably correct in all he had said regarding Madame Vaughan, though he had but an imperfect knowledge of her history. At the time when her mental malady first rendered it necessary that she should be placed under restraint, the private lunatic asylums of England were in a very different condition from what they are now. They were for the most part held by low-born ignorant men, who derived their entire livelihood from the sums of money paid for the maintenance of the unfortunate wretches confided to their charge, and whose gains were consequently greater in proportion to the manner in which they ignored or refused the requirements of their inmates. A person calling himself a physician, and perhaps in possession of some purchased degree, hired at a small stipend and non-resident, looked in occasionally, asked a few questions, and signed certificates destined to hoodwink official eyes, which in those days never saw too clearly at the best of times. But the staff of keepers, male and female, was always numerous and efficient. Those were the merry days of the

iron collar and the broad leather bastinado, of the gag and the cold bath, of the irons and the whipping-post. They did not care much about what the Lunacy Commissioners did, or wrote, or exacted, in those days, and each man did what he thought best for himself. The date of the Commissioners' visits, which then were few and far between, were accurately known long beforehand; the "medical attendant" was on the spot; the patients, such as were visible, were tricked up into a proper state of cleanliness and order; and the others were duly hidden away until the authorities had departed. The licensing was a farce, only to be exceeded in absurdity by the other regulations; and villany, blackguardism, brutality, and chicanery reigned supreme.

For two years after Madame Vaughan was first received into the asylum—God help us!—as it was called, the outer world was mercifully a blank to her. She arrived in a settled state of stupor, in which she remained, cowering in a corner of the room which she shared with other afflicted creatures, but taking no heed of them, of the

antics which they played, of the yells and shrieks which they uttered, of the fantastic illusions of which they were the victims, of the punishment which their conduct brought upon them. Her face covered by her hands, her poor body ever rocking to and fro, there she remained for ever in the one spot until nightfall, when she crept to the miserable couch allotted to her, and curling herself up as an animal in its slumber, was unheard, almost unseen, until the next day. The wretched food which they gave her, coarse in quality and meagre in quantity, she ate in silence; in silence she bore the spoken ribaldry, and the practical jokes which in the first few weeks after her admission the guardians of the establishment, and indeed the great proprietor himself, amused themselves by heaping upon her; so that in a little time she was found incapable of administering to their amusement, and was suffered to remain unmolested.

At the end of the time mentioned, a change took place in the condition of the patient under the following circumstances. One of the nurses

had had her married sister and niece to visit her; and after tea, by way of a cheerful amusement, the visitors were conducted through the female ward. The child, a little girl of five or six years old, frightened out of her life, hung back as she entered the gloomy room, where women in every stage of mania, some fierce and shrieking, some silent and moody, were collected. But her aunt, the nurse, laughed at the child's fears; and the mother, who through the hospitality of their entertainer had, after the clearing away of the tea-equipage, been provided with a beverage which both cheered and inebriated, bade the girl not to be a fool; and on her still hanging back and evincing an intention of bursting into tears, administered to her a severe thump on the back, which had the effect of causing the little one to break forth at once into a howl.

From the first instant of the child's entrance into the room, Madame Vaughan had roused herself from her usual attitude. The sound of the child's pattering feet seemed to act on her with electrical influence. She raised her head from

out her hands; she sat up erect, bright, observant. The corner in which she sat was dark, and no one was in the habit of taking any notice of her. So she sat, watching the shrinking child. She heard the mocking laugh with which the nurse sneered at the little one's terror, she heard the harsh tones in which the mother chid the child, and saw the blow which followed on the words. Then she made two springs forward, and the next minute had the woman on the ground, and was grappling at her throat. The attendants sprang upon her, released the woman from her grasp, and led her shrieking to her cell.

"My child, my child! why did she strike my child?" were the words which she screamed forth; almost the first which those in the asylum had ever heard her utter; so at least the nurse told the proprietor, who with other assistants, male as well as female, was speedily on the spot.

"She used to sit, as quiet as quiet, never opening her mouth, as you know very well, sir," said the woman, "and was sittin' just as usual, so far as I know, when my sister here, as I was

showing round, fetched her little gal a smack on the head because she wouldn't come on; and then Vaughan springs at her like a wild-beast, and wanted to tear the life out of her, she did, a murderin' wretch!"

"Had she ever said anything about a child before?" asked the proprietor.

"Never said nothing about any body, and certingly nothing about a child," replied the nurse.

"And it was because she saw this child struck that she burst out, and she's hollerin' about the child now—is that it?"

"Jest so, sir," replied the nurse, looking at a mark of teeth on her hand, and shaking her head viciously in the direction in which the patient had been led away.

"That's it, Agar," said the proprietor; "I thought we should get at it some day. Couldn't get anything out of the cove I first saw, and the lawyers were as tight as wax. 'You'll get your money,' they says. 'We're responsible for that,' they says, 'and that ought to be enough for you.' They wouldn't let on, any of 'em, what it was

that had upset her at first; but I knew it would come out sooner or later, and it's come out now, though. She's gone off her head grievin' after a kid, and no two ways about it."

"Ah!" said Mr. Agar, who was a man of few words, "shouldn't wonder. Question is, what's to be done with her now? Mustn't be allowed to kick up these wagaries, you know; we shall have the neighbours complainin' again. Screamed and yelled and bit and fisted away like a good un, she did. We ain't had such a rumpus since the Tiger's time."

"She must be taught manners," said the proprietor significantly. "Tell your missus to look after her. This woman," indicating the nurse with his elbow, "ain't any good when it comes to a rough and tumble, and I'm doubtful if Vaughan won't give us some trouble yet."

So Madame Vaughan was delivered over to the tender mercies of Mrs. Agar, and underwent some of the tortures which she had seen inflicted upon others. She was punished cruelly for her outbreak; but that done, there was an end of it.

The proprietor was wrong in his surmise that she would give them further trouble. She lapsed back into her old silent state, cowering in her old corner, rocking to and fro after her old fashion; and thus she remained, when the proprietor, having made sufficient money, and having had several hints that certain malpractices of his, if further indulged in, would probably bring him to the Old Bailey, handed over his business to Dr. Bulph.

It was during Dr. Bulph's time that the poor lady had a severe bodily illness, during which she was sedulously attended by Dr. Bulph himself—a clever hard man of the world, not unkind, but probably prompted in his attention to his patient by the feeling that it would be unwise to let a regularly-paid income of 300*l.* a-year slip through his fingers if a little trouble on his part could save it. When she became convalescent, her mental condition seemed to have altered. Instead of being dull and moping, she was bright and restless, ever asking about her child, who, as it seemed to her poor distraught fancy, had been with her just before her illness. Dr. Bulph had had some idea,

that when her bodily ailment left her, there was a chance that her mind might have become at last clearer; but he shook his head when he saw these new symptoms. Her child, her child! what had been done with it? Why had they taken it away? Why was it kept from her? That was the constant, incessant burden of her cry, sometimes asked almost calmly, sometimes with piteous wailings or fierce denunciations of their cruelty. Nothing satisfied her, nothing appeased her. Madame Vaughan's case was evidently a very bad one indeed; and when Dr. Bulph took Dr. Wainwright, who was about purchasing his business, the round of his establishment, he pointed Madame Vaughan out to him, and said, "That will be a noisy one, I'm afraid, until the end."

The doctor was wrong in his prophecy. Dr. Wainwright, with as much skill and far more *savoir faire* than his predecessor, adopted very different tactics. Although since the departure of the first proprietor of the asylum no cruelty had been inflicted on the patients, all of them who were at all intractable or difficult to govern

had been kept in restraint. The first thing that Dr. Wainwright did, when he took possession, was to give them an amount of liberty which they had not previously enjoyed. Poor Madame Vaughan, falling into one of her shrieking-fits of "My child! where's my child?" was surprised on looking up to see the tall figure of the new doctor in the open doorway of her room; and her screams died away as she looked at his handsome smiling face, and heard his voice say in soft tones, "Where is she? Come, let us look for her." Then he took her gently by the arm and led her into the garden, round which they walked together. The new sense of liberty, the air blowing on her cheeks, the fresh smell of the flowers, —these unaccustomed delights had a wonderful influence on the poor sufferer. For a time, at least, she forgot the main burden of her misery in the delight she experienced in dwelling on them; and thenceforward, though she recurred constantly, daily indeed, to her one theme of sorrow, it was never with the poignant bitterness of former times. She grew attached to the Doctor, whose quiet

interested manner suited her wonderfully, and formed a singular attachment for George, then a young man just entering on his office duties, looking forward to his coming with a sweet motherly tenderness, which he seemed to reciprocate in a most filial manner.

From that time forward Madame Vaughan's lot, as far as her melancholy condition permitted, was a happy one. No acute return of mania ever supervened; she remained in a state of harmless quiet; and save for her invariable expectation of the arrival of her child, a hope which she never failed to indulge in, it would have been impossible to think that the quiet, well-dressed, white-haired lady, who tended the flowers, and settled the ornaments of her little room, or paced regularly up and down the garden, sometimes alone, sometimes conversing with Dr. Wainwright, or leaning reliantly on George's arm, was the inmate of a lunatic asylum, and had gone through such tempestuous scenes as fell to her lot in the early days of her residence there. The "noisy one" had indeed come to be the gentlest member of

that strange household; and one of the greatest annoyances which Dr. Wainwright ever experienced was when one of the members of the lawyers' firm who paid the annual stipend for the poor lady's care happened to call with the cheque, and on the Doctor's wishing him to witness the comparatively happy state to which the patient had arrived, said shortly that "he had enough to do in his business with people who were only sane enough to prevent their being shut up, and that he didn't want to have anything to do with those who were a stage further advanced in the disease."

On the morning after the events recorded in the beginning of this chapter, George Wainwright found a small pencil-note placed on the huge can of cold water which was brought to him for his bath. Opening it, he read:

"DEAR MR. GEORGE,—Madame hopes she shall see you before you go into town this morning. She has something special to say to you. I have told her I was sure you would not fail her.

—Yours, L. MARSHALL."

In compliance with this wish, George presented himself immediately after breakfast at Madame Vaughan's room. He found her ready dressed, and anxiously expecting him.

"Why, *maman*," he commenced, "already up and doing! Your bright activity is an actual reproach to a sluggard like myself. But I heard you wanted me, and I'm here."

"Would you mind taking a turn in the garden, George?" she asked. "The morning looks very fine, and I've something to say to you that I think should be said in the sunlight and among the flowers."

"Something pleasant, then, I argue from that," he said. "And you know I'd do a great deal more than give up a few minutes from my dry dull old office to be of any pleasant use to you; besides, work is slack just now—it always is at this time of the year—and I can easily be spared. Come, let us walk."

She threw a shawl over her head and shoulders with, as George could not help remarking, all the innate grace and ease of a Frenchwoman,

took his arm, and descended the stairs into the garden. It was indeed a lovely morning, just at that time when Summer makes her last determined fight before gracefully surrendering to Autumn. The turf was yet green and soft, though somewhat faded here and there by the sun's long-continued power, and the air was mild; but the paths were already flecked with leaves, and ruddy tints were visible on the extreme outer foliage of the trees. When they arrived in the grounds, they found several of the patients already there; some chattering to each other, others walking moodily apart. Many of them seemed to treat Madame Vaughan with marked deference, and exhibited that deference in immediately clearing out of the way, and leaving her and her companion unmolested in their walk.

After a few turns up and down, George said,

"Well, *maman*, and the special business?"

"Ah yes, George, I had forgotten," said Madame, pressing her hand to her head. "I dreamed about *her* last night, George—about my child."

"Not an uncommon dream for you, surely, *maman?*" said George kindly. "What you are always thinking of by day will most probably not desert your mind at night."

"No, not at all uncommon; but I have never dreamed of her as I dreamed last night. George, she is coming; you will see her very soon."

"I! But you, *maman*—you will see her too?"

"I am not so sure of that, George. She was all dim and indistinct in my dream. I think I shall be dead, George; but you will see her; I shall have the comfort of knowing that, and—and of knowing that you will love her, George."

"Why, *maman*, of course I shall love her, for your sake."

"No, George; for her own. You will love her for her own sake, and you will marry her, my son."

"*Maman, maman!*" said George, taking her hand, and looking up into her face with a loving smile. "But how do you know that she will consent? You forget I am an old bachelor, and—"

"You will marry her, George," said Madame, her face clouding over at once. "And yet—and yet she is but an infant, poor child!"

"There, there, *maman* darling—"

"No, no; don't attempt to get out of it. And yet I saw it all—you and she at St. Peter's after Tenebræ, and I—and—"

"Now this is a question for my father to be consulted on," said George. "He is the only man who could help us in this difficulty, and he's away in the country, you know. We must wait till he comes back;" and he drew her quietly towards the house.

"Poor dear *maman!*" said George Wainwright to himself, as he stood waiting for the omnibus which was to bear him into town. "What a strange idea! Not so far wrong, though! A phantom evolved from a diseased brain, a nothing. A creature without existence is the only wife I'm ever likely to have! I only wish young Paul was as heart-free, and as likely to remain so."

## CHAPTER IX.

### DEAR ANNETTE.

It was a noticeable fact, that though the Beachborough folk were, as they would themselves have expressed it, "main curous" about Mrs. Stothard and her position in the Derinzy household, none of them devoted much time to speculating about Miss Annette, or Miss Netty as she was generally called by them. That she was a "dreadful in-vallid" all knew; that she was sometimes confined to the house for weeks together when labouring under a severe attack of her illness—which was ascribed by some to nerves, by some to weakness, and by others to a curious disorder known as "ricketts"—was also well known. It was understood, moreover, that she did not like her indisposition alluded to; and consequently, when she occasionally appeared in the village, accompanied by her aunt Mrs. Derinzy, it was a point of politeness on the part

of the villagers to ignore the fact of their not having seen her for weeks past and the cause of her absence, and to entertain her with gossip about Bessie Fairlight's levity, Giles Croggin's drunkenness, Farmer Hawkers' harvest-home, or such kindred topics. No one ever mentioned illness or doctors before Miss Netty; if they had, Mrs. Derinzy, a woman of strong mind and, when necessary, sharp tongue, would speedily have cut in and changed the conversation.

But although the Beachborough people saw little of Annette Derinzy, that little they liked. Amongst simple folk of this kind, a person labouring under illness, more especially chronic illness—not any of your common fevers or anything low of that kind, which nearly every one has had in their time, and which are for the most part curable by very simple remedies—but mysterious illness, which "comes on when you don't expect it," as though most disorders were heralded, and the exact time of their arrival announced by infallible symptoms, and which lasts for weeks together—such a person takes

brevet rank with their acquaintance, and is looked up to with the greatest respect. Moreover, Miss Netty had a very pleasant way with her, being always courteous and friendly, sometimes, indeed, a little too friendly; for she would want to go into the fishermen's cottages, and into the lacemakers' rooms, and would ask questions which were not very pertinent, or indeed very wise; until she was brought up very short by her aunt, who would take her by the elbow, and haul her away with scant ceremony. And another great thing in her favour was, that she was very pretty.

Ah, well-meaning, kindly people, who endeavour to cheer your ugly children by repeating the scores of old adages with which the stupidity of our forefathers has enriched our language, telling them that "beauty is only skin deep," that "it is better to be good than beautiful," that "handsome is that handsome does," and a variety of other maxims of the same kind—when will you be honest, and confess that a pretty face is almost the best dowry a young girl can have? It gains her admirers always, and very frequently it gains

her friends; it makes easy and pleasant her path in life, and saves her from the bitterest distress, the deepest laceration which can be inflicted on the female heart, in the feeling that she is despised of men, which, being translated, means that she is neglected, while others are appreciated. Miss Netty was pretty decidedly, but she was in that almost incredible position of being unaware of the fact. Save her own family and the people in the village, she saw no one; and though the gossips were inclined not to be reticent of their admiration even in the presence of its object, they were always restrained by a wholesome dread of the wrath of Mrs. Derinzy, which on more than one occasion had been evoked by the compliments paid to her niece.

It was the more extraordinary that such persons as Mrs. Powler and Mrs. Jupp should have admired Annette, as her style was by no means such as generally finds favour with persons in their station in life. Great black staring eyes, snub noses, firm round red cheeks, bright red lips, and jet-black hair, well bandolined and

greased so as to lie flat on the head, or corkscrewed into thin ringlets, generally make up their standard of beauty. Country people have a great opinion of strength of limb and firmness of flesh; and "she be *that* hard," was one of the most delicate tributes which a Beachborough swain could pay. In the agricultural districts those womanly qualities of tenderness, softness, and delicacy, which are so prized amongst more refined circles, are rather held at a discount; they are regarded by the rustic mind as on a level with piano-playing and Berlin-wool working —good enough as extras, but not to be compared with the homely talents of milking and stocking-darning. Personal appearance is regarded in much the same way, elegance of form being less thought of than strength, and a large arm obtaining much more admiration than a small hand. Annette was a tall, but a slight and decidedly delicate-looking girl.

"It isn't after her uncle she takes," Mrs. Powler would say; "a little giggling, flibberty-gibbet of a man, that might be blowed away in a pouf!"

"Well, mum," said little Ann Bradshaw, the "gell" who was specially retained for Mrs. Powler's service, and who, as jackal, purveyed all the gossip on which, after due preparation, her mistress lived,—"well, mum, I du 'low Miss Netty's well enow to look at, but nothing like the Captain, who sure-*ly* is a main handsome man!"

"Eh, dear heart, did one ever hear the like!" cried Mrs. Powler. "Here's chits and chicks like this talkin' about main handsome men! Why, Ann, you was niver in Exeter, or you'd have seen a waxy image just like the Captain, wi' his black hair and his straight nose, and his blue chin, in the barber's shop-window. Handsome, indeed!" said the old lady, with a recollection of the deceased Mr. Powler's rotund face; "he's but a poor show; a mere skellinton of a chap!"

"Well, mum, it can't be said that Miss Netty favours her aunt Mrs. D'rinzy neither," said Ann, who, seeing her mistress was disposed for a chat, saw her way to at least postponing the execution of a very portentous and elaborate job of darning which had sat heavy on her soul for some days

past. "Mrs. D'rinzy is that slight and slim and gen-teel in her make, which Miss Netty do not follow after."

"Slight, and slim, and genteel make!" repeated Mrs. Powler with much indignation, and a downward glance at her own pursy proportions; "ah, straight up and down like a thrashin'-floor door, if that's what ye mean! Lord love us, here's a gal as I took out of charity, and saved from goin' to the workis, a givin' her 'pinions 'bout figgers, and shapes, and makes, and the like, as though she was a milliner or a middiff! Well, well, on'y to think!"

"I didn't mean no harm, mum, I'm sure," said the worldly-wise handmaiden, "and I don't think much of Mrs. D'rinzy, nor indeed of the Captain neither, since Nancy Bell—as you know is housemaid up at the Tower—told me how she'd found the stick-stuff which he du make his eyebrows of—black, and grease, and muck."

"No?" exclaimed the old lady, her good temper returning at the chance of hearing some spicy retailable talk. "Du he do that? Do'ee tell, Ann!"

Thus invited, Miss Bradshaw launched out into an elaborate story, rendered more elaborate by her anti-darning proclivities, of the mysteries of Captain Derinzy's toilet, as she had learned them from Miss Bell. Mrs. Powler encouraged her to prattle on this point for a long time; and when she had finished, asked her whether Nancy Bell had mentioned anything about the general way of living at the Tower, more especially as Miss Netty and Mrs. Stothard were concerned.

"Not that anything she says isn't as full of lies as a sieve's full of holes," said the old lady. "I mind the time"—a terrible old lady this, with an unexampled memory for bad things against people—"I mind the time when she was quite a little gell, and went and told the vicar a passil o' lies about her uncle, Ned Richards the blacksmith. And the vicar put Ned into his sermin the next Sunday, and preached at un, and everybody knowed who was meant; and Ned stood up in church, and gev it to the vicar back again; and Ned was had up for brawlin', as they called it, and there was a fine to-do, and all through

Nancy Bell. But what does she say of Miss Netty, Ann? Are they kind to her like up there?"

"O, yes, mum; Nancy thinks so, leastwise. But no one sees Miss Netty often, mum."

"No one sees her?"

"Only Mrs. Stothard, mum. She and Mrs. Stothard has their rooms away from the rest, mum, lest they should disturb the Captain when Miss Netty's ill, mum; and no one sees her but Mrs. Stothard then."

"Ah," said Mrs. Powler, "David or Solomon, or one of 'em, I don't rightly remember which, were not far off when he said that the bread of dependence was bitter, and these great folk don't bake it no more sweet than others for their poor relations, it seems. So they take the board and lodgin' out of Mrs. Stothard by makin' her a nuss, eh, Ann?"

"They du indeed, mum. I du 'low that's why we niver see Mrs. Stothard in the village, being so taken up with Miss Netty, and a nasty temper, not caring to throw a word at a dog, likewise."

"How does Nancy think they git on betwixt themselves?"

"What, the Captain and Mrs. D'rinzy? O, they git on all right; leastwise, she's master, Nance says. The Captain isn't much 'count in his own house; but Mrs. D. niver let him see it, bless you; and he du bluster and rave sometimes, Nance say, when he's put out, and thinks she can't hear him."

"What puts 'im out, Ann? He hev an easy life of it, sure-ly: nothin' to do but to kick up his heels about the place."

"That's just it, missis. He wants something more to du. He du hate the place like pison, Nance have heerd 'im say, and ask Mrs. D'rinzy, wi' awful language, what they was waitin' and wastin' there lives here for."

"And what did she say then?"

"Allays the same. 'You know,' says she, 'you know what we're waitin' for; and it'll come, it'll come sure as sure.' 'Wouldn't it come just the same, or easier rather, if we was out of this, up in London, or somewheres?' the Captain says

once. 'No,' says Mrs. D., 'it wouldn't. When we've got the prize under lock and key,' she says, 'we know where to look for it, and who to send for it; but when it's open to the world, there's no knowin' who may run off with it,' she says."

"A prize!" said the old lady, looking very much astonished,—"got a prize under lock and key? Why, what could she mean by that? You hain't heerd in the village o' anything hevin' been found up at the Tower, hev you, Ann?"

Ann, leaning against the door, withdrew one foot from the floor, and slowly rubbed it up and down her other leg,—a gymnastic performance she was in the habit of going through when she taxed her powers of memory. It failed, however, to have any result in the present instance; and Ann was compelled to confess that she had never heard of anything in particular being found at the Tower. She did this with more reluctance, as she foresaw the speedy termination of the gossip, and her consequent relegation to her darning duties.

But Mrs. Powler, who had been much struck with the conversation overheard by Nancy Bell, and repeated to her by her own handmaiden, sat pondering over the words for some time, allowing Ann to remain in the room, and at last bade her go round, and ask Mrs. Jupp to step in for a few minutes. When Mrs. Jupp arrived, Mrs. Powler made Ann repeat her story; and when she concluded, the old lady bade her stand away out of earshot, and said to Mrs. Jupp in a hollow whisper,

"What do you think of that?"

"Of what?" asked Mrs. Jupp, in an equally ghostly tone.

"'Bout the prize? Do you think, Harriet, that it can be any of Powler's 'runs'? They used to hide 'em in the first place as come handy, when the excisers was after 'em; and I've been wondering whether they might ha' stowed away some kegs, or bales, or things, in the lower garden, or thereabouts, and these D'rinzys ha' found 'em. I wonder whether I could claim 'em, Harriet?" said the old lady earnestly. "He left

everything he had in the world to his beloved wife, Powler did."

Mrs. Jupp, who had been receiving these last words with many sniffs, denoting her contempt for her friend's notions, waited patiently until Mrs. Powler had finished, and then said,

"I don't think you need trouble yourself about that. It isn't about runs, or kegs, or bales, or anything of that kind, that Mrs. Derinzy meant, if so be she said anything of the kind, which I main doubt; Nancy Bell and your Ann being regular Anias and Sapphira for lying, or the man as was turned into a white leopard by the prophet for saying he hadn't asked the young man for a change of clothes."

"Du let alone naggin' and girdin' at my Ann for once, Harriet!" interrupted Mrs. Powler. "Let's s'pose Mrs. D'rinzy said it; there's no harm in s'posin', you know. What did she mean 'bout the prize?"

"Mean? What could she mean but Miss Netty?"

"Miss Netty? prize?" cried Mrs. Powler, to

whom the combination of these words was hopelessly embarrassing. "Ah, well, I'm becomin' a moithered old 'ooman, I suppose?"

"No, no, dear," said Mrs. Jupp, who never liked to see the old lady put out. "I'm sure there's they as are twenty years younger would like to be able to see as far into a milestone as you can. Only you don't know about this, because you don't get out much now, and you don't know what's goin' on up at the Tower, save from Ann and suchlike. Now my ideer is, that Miss Netty have come into a fortin'."

"No!" cried the old lady.

"Yes," said Mrs. Jupp, nodding her head violently. "Yes, I think she have, and that's what her aunt meant about a prize, I take it. For don't you see, we've asked, all of us, often enough, what kept them livin' down here. 'Tain't that they come down for the shootin', or the yachtin', or that, jest at one season, like Sir 'Erc'les, though he was bred and born down here, and it's his fam'ly place. But there they stick, summer and winter, spring and autumn, never

movin', though the Captain's a-wearyin' hisself to death; and there's no call for Mrs. Derinzy to stop here neither."

"Not for her health?"

"Not a bit of it! Between you and me, I think there's a consp— However, I'll tell you more about that when I know more; meantime, I think Mrs. Derinzy's all right, and I don't think it's for health Miss Annette is kept here."

"The Dorsetsheer air—" Mrs. Powler began; but seeing an incredulous smile on her friend's face, she broke off shortly, and said, "Well, then, what does keep 'em down here?"

"The fortin that we was speakin' of; the prize that Nancy Bell heard Mrs. D. tell of. Don't you see, my dear? Suppose what I think is right—they've got the poor thing down here in their own hands, to do jest what they like wi'; nobody to say, With your leave, or By your leave; cooped up there wi' them two old people and that termagant Mrs. Stothard. Now, if she was away in London, or Exeter, or any other large place o' that sort, why o' course there'd be young men

sweetheartin' her—for she's a main pratty gell, though slouchin', and not one to show herself off—and she'd be gettin' married, and her money would go away from them to her husband. That's what Mrs. D. meant about the prize bein' 'open to the world,' and people 'runnin' off with it,' and that like."

Mrs. Powler sat speechless for a few moments, looking at her friend with her sharp little black eyes, and going over what had just been told her in her mind. Her faculties began to be somewhat dimmed by age, and she required time for intellectual digestion. Mrs. Jupp knew her friend's habit, and remained silent likewise, thoughtfully rubbing the side of her nose with a knitting-needle which she had produced from her pocket. At length the old lady said:

"I du 'low you're right, Harriet, though I niver give you credit for so much sharpness before."

And Mrs. Jupp had many pleasant teas, and many succulent suppers, and much pleasant gossip, on the strength of her perspicacity in the matter of the great Derinzy mystery.

Strange to say, the woman's idea was not very far away from the truth. When Mrs. Derinzy told her husband that their son Paul should have a fortune of eighty thousand pounds, which he should receive from his wife's trustees, she made up her mind from that moment to carry her intention into execution, come what might. The girl was so young, that there was plenty of time for the elaboration of her plans—two or three years hence it would do to work out the scheme in detail; all that was necessary to see after was, that so soon as the girl arrived at an impressible age, she should be taken to some very quiet place, where she could see very few people, and that at that time Paul should be thrown in her way, and the result left to favouring chance. Mrs. Derinzy was doubtful whether anything ought to be said to Paul about it; but the Captain spoke up strongly, and declared that any attempt to dispose of "the young man by private contract" would certainly result in prejudicing him against his cousin, and that it would be much better if he were left to "shake

a loose leg" for a time, as it would render him much more docile and biddable when they spoke to him afterwards. Mrs. Derinzy, violently objurgating such language on the part of her husband, yet comprehended the soundness of his advice; and Paul, who saw very little of Annette on the occasion of his holidays from school, and then only thought of her as a little orphan cousin to whom his parents acted as guardians, was left to take up his appointment at the Stannaries Office, without having the least idea that, like Mr. Swiveller, "a young lady, who had not only great personal attractions, but great wealth, was at that moment growing up for him."

The young lady who furnished forth all this feast of gossip to the good folks of Beachborough — gossip not so completely unlike the sort of thing which goes on in larger places, and is practised by more important communities—had not the least suspicion that she was an object of curiosity and discussion to her humble neighbours. She knew little of them—that is to say, of the less-poor class among the poor—for to the lowest

and most suffering part of the community she was generous with the desultory kindness of an untaught girl; and she had no notion that she differed in circumstances or disposition from other people sufficiently to excite curiosity or induce discussion. Few girls of Annette Derinzy's age, in her position in life, are so ignorant of the world, so completely without the means of instituting comparisons in social matters, or unravelling social problems, as she was. The conventional schoolgirl of real life, though perhaps not the ritualistic innocent of the *Daisy-Chain* literature, could have beaten Annette Derinzy hollow in comprehension of human aims and motives, and in knowledge of the desirabilities of life. She was passably content with herself and her surroundings, and had not yet been moved by any stronger feeling than irritation caused by her aunt's troublesome over-solicitude for her health and Mrs. Stothard's watchfulness. She was not, she believed, so strong as most girls of her age, who lived in comfort, and had nothing to trouble them; but she felt sure the care, the restrictions

she had to undergo, were unwarranted by her health; and she sometimes got so far on the path of worldly wisdom as to suspect that her aunt made a great fuss with her, in order to get the credit of self-sacrifice and superlative duty-doing. Annette's perspicacity did not extend to defining the individuals in the narrow and ultra-quiet society of Beachborough, among whom, as Captain Derinzy would have said, they "vegetated," who were to be deluded into giving Mrs. Derinzy a better character than she deserved. Like "the ugly duck," who scrambled through the hedge, and found himself in the wide, wide world, the most insignificant change of position would, to Annette Derinzy, have implied infinite possibilities of enlightenment; but at present she was very securely on the near side of the hedge, and almost ignorant that there was a far side.

The young lady of whom Mrs. Derinzy invariably spoke as "dear Annette," even when she was most annoyed with or about her, as though she had set this formula as a rule and a reminder for herself, was a very pretty girl, belonging to a

type of beauty which is rather commonly to be found associated with delicate health. She was rather tall, very slight, with slender hands, and a transparently fair complexion. Her features were not very regular, and but for the deep, dark eyes, and the remarkably sweet, though somewhat rare, smile which lighted them up, she would hardly have been pronounced handsome by casual observers. But she was very handsome, as all would have been ready to acknowledge afterwards who had noticed the extreme refinement of her general appearance and the gracefulness of her figure. Her beauty was marred by no trace of ill-health beyond the uncertainty of the colour—which sometimes tinted her cheeks brightly enough, but at others faded into a waxen paleness—and the occasional restlessness of her movements. Annette was not very striking at first sight; she was one of those women who do not become less interesting by observation, but who rather continue to occupy, to interest, perhaps a little to perplex, the observer. She was graceful, she was even elegant in appearance, but she was not gentle-

looking. The dark eyes had no fiery expression, and the well-shaped mouth, not foolishly small or unpleasantly compressed, had decided sweetness in the full fresh lips; and yet the last thing any accurate noter of physiognomy would have said of Miss Derinzy was, that she looked gentle. Impatience, impulse, whether for good or ill to be determined by circumstances,—these were plainly to be read in her face. And one more indication was there—not, it may be, legible to indifferent eyes, but which, had there been any to study the girl with the clear-sightedness of affection, would have made itself plain in all its present meaning and future menace—the vacuity of an unoccupied, inactive heart. Annette Derinzy loved no living human being. She knew neither love nor grief, the true civilising influences which need to be exercised in each individual instance, if the human creature is to be elevated above primitive conditions. She had no recollection of her parents, and therefore no standard by which to measure the tenderness which she might covet as a possession, or deplore as a loss—by whose

depth and endurance she might test the shallowness and the insufficiency of the conventional observance shown to her by the interested relatives who furnished all her life was destined to know of natural love and care. She had no brother or sister, or familiar girlish friendships, nor had she ever displayed an inclination to contract any of those lesser ties with which genial and sensitive natures endeavour to supplement their deprivation of the greater. Either she was of a reserved, uncommunicative temperament, or she had been so steadily restricted from the society of other young people, that the habit of depending entirely upon herself had been effectually formed; for Annette never complained of the seclusion in which the family lived, and in some cases received with a sufficiently ill grace intelligence that it was about to be broken in upon.

Like most ill-tempered persons, Mrs. Derinzy had a keen perception of faults of temper, and no toleration for them. She declared that of all things she hated selfishness and sulk most; and the recipients of the sentiments were apt to think

she had all the justification of it which an intimate knowledge of the vices in question could supply. She accused "dear Annette" at times of both, not altogether unjustly perhaps, but yet not with strict justice. If she was selfish, it was because her life was narrow; its horizon was close upon her; no large interests occupied it, no external responsibility laid its claims upon Annette. There did not exist any one to whom she could feel herself indispensable, or even "a comfort;" and though she was surrounded with external care and consideration to what she held to be a superfluous and unreasonable extent, her native shrewdness led her to distinguish with unerring accuracy between this perfunctory and organised observance and the spontaneous affectionate guardianship, without effort on the one side or constraint upon the other, which the natural relationship of parent and child secures. She did not love her aunt Mrs. Derinzy, and she positively disliked the Captain, who reciprocated the sentiment; as was not unnatural, seeing that he was paying the price of success in his schemes against

her peace and happiness by the unmitigated *ennui* produced by his life at Beachborough. For what there really was of fine and noble, of amiable and elevated, in the character of Annette Derinzy her own nature was accountable, and in no degree her training, associations, and surroundings. She had none of the enthusiasm and fancy of girlhood about her—the atmosphere of calculation, worldliness, and discontent in which she lived was too decidedly and fatally unfavourable to their growth—but she did not substitute for them any evil propensities or unworthy ambitions, and her chief faults were those of temper. She was undeniably sulky; her aunt did not traduce her on that point, though she did not fitly understand the origin of the defect, or make any kind or charitable allowance for its manifestation. Anger rarely took the form of passion with Annette; but when aroused, it was very difficult to allay, and her resentment was not easy to eradicate. The individual in the family whom she disliked most—her uncle—was that one who least often excited the girl's temper. She kept clear of him, away

from him, as much as she could, and usually regarded him with a degree of contempt which seemed to act as a safeguard to her anger. But the internal life of the house, as shared by the three women, Mrs. Derinzy, her niece, and Mrs. Stothard, was sometimes far from peaceful. Annette was possessed of much better feelings than might have been expected, her antecedents and her present circumstances considered; and she was sometimes successfully appealed to to forego her own will and submit to Mrs. Derinzy's, by a representation of the delicacy of that lady's health, and the ill-effect which opposition and the sullen estrangement of her niece would have upon her. Many quarrels were made up in this way, and not the less readily that Annette was curious about the condition of Mrs. Derinzy's health. She never exactly understood the nature of her illness, —which did not seem to the girl to interfere with her pursuing the ordinary routine of a lady's life in a secluded country place, and admitted of all the moderate and mildly-flavoured diversions which such conditions of existence could bestow,—

but which was kept in view constantly by the patient herself and Mrs. Stothard, pleaded in support of the impossibility of any change in the mode of life of the Derinzy family, and substantiated by the periodic visits of Dr. Wainwright. Annette was wholly unconscious that while her own illness was the subject of village gossip, comment, and speculation, no one outside had any notion that Mrs. Derinzy was a chronic sufferer, requiring the expensive and solicitous care of a physician of eminence from London, who was well known in Beachborough to be such, and who was generally supposed to come to see the young lady. She would have been greatly angered had she suspected the existence of such an equivoque; for among the strongest of her feelings were a repugnance to knowing herself to be discussed, and an intense dislike to Dr. Wainwright.

Annette's conduct towards the confidential physician, who was said to be so clever in the treatment of disease, and especially of disease of the nondescript, or at least not described, kind from which Mrs. Derinzy suffered, had frequently

been such as to justify her aunt's displeasure, and deserve her reprobation as ill-tempered and ill-bred. His appearance at Beachborough was invariably a signal for Annette's exhibiting herself in her least attractive light, and generally for open revolt against Mrs. Derinzy's wishes and authority. The girl would contrive to get out of the house unnoticed, and remain away for hours; or she would pretend illness and go to bed, and lie there quite silent, and refusing food, until she was convinced, by the entrance of Dr. Wainwright into her room, and his accosting her with the calm imperturbable authority of a physician, that the very worst way in which to avoid seeing a doctor was by pretending to be ill. Or she would make her appearance just in time to sit down at dinner, and having returned his greeting with the utmost curtness and reluctance, maintain obstinate silence throughout the meal, and retire immediately on its conclusion. All remonstrances had failed to induce her to behave better in this respect, and even Dr. Wainwright's skilful quizzing of her for this peculiarity—which he told her was very un-

fashionable, because he was quite a favourite with the ladies—had no effect. She either could not or would not say why she disliked Dr. Wainwright, but she had no hesitation in acknowledging that she did dislike him.

Mrs. Stothard's position in the Derinzy household, however anomalous in the sight of outsiders, was such as to make her perfectly aware of the relations of each of its members to the others, while there was something in her own relation to each respectively unknown to, uncomprehended by, them. She ruled them all in a quiet unobtrusive way, whose absolutism was as complete as it was unmarked, unmarred by any tyranny of manner. We have seen how Captain Derinzy and she were affected towards each other, and this narrative will have to deal with her manipulation of Mrs. Derinzy's "scheme." As for Annette, she seemed to be Mrs. Stothard's chief object in life, as she certainly constituted her principal occupation in every day. But not ostentatiously or oppressively so. If Annette had been called upon to say which of her three asso-

ciates was least displeasing to her, which she least frequently wished away, she would have replied, "Mrs. Stothard;" but she did not love even her. With Mrs. Stothard, Annette seldom quarrelled; but a visit from Dr. Wainwright always furnished the occasion for one of their rare disagreements; so that when the elder woman came to tell the girl of his arrival one afternoon, while she was lying down to rest after a long ramble, she knew she was bringing her very unwelcome news.

Annette had been restless of late. She was not ill, and there were no symptoms of suffering in her appearance; but she had taken one of her fits of mental weariness, for which her life offered no irrational excuse, and, as her habit was, she had resorted, as a means of wearing it off, to severe bodily exercise, walking such distances as secured her against the danger of a companion, and yet never succeeding in being as tired as she wished to be.

"I should like to sleep for a week, a month, a year," she would say, "and wake up in some

new world, with nothing and nobody in it I ever seen before, and everything one thinks says and does quite different."

But when Annette was weariest of mind, tried to be weariest of body, she slept less, her temper was at its worst. So Mrs. Stott found her, when she urged her to get up and d nicely for dinner, because Dr. Wainwright arrived, more than usually recalcitrant.

"I sha'n't," said the girl, tossing her ha some arms over her head as she lay at full len upon a sofa in her dressing-room, and ruffling dark hair with her wilful hands,—"I sha'n't. detest him; you know I detest him. What is always watching me, and trying to catch my e for? He's a bad cruel man, and he comes h for no good. What's the matter with my au She was very well on Monday."

"I don't know indeed, Miss Annette; old complaint, I suppose."

"The old complaint! *what* old complai It's all nonsense, in my belief, and he persua her she's ill for a purpose of his own. At

events, let him see *her* and be done with it; *I sha'n't* go down to dinner."

"O yes, you will," said Mrs. Stothard, who had been quietly laying out Annette's dress, pouring hot water into a basin, and disposing combs and brushes on the toilet-table,—"O yes, you will. You'll never be so foolish as to make a quarrel with your uncle and aunt about such a thing as that, and have the servants talking of it. Come, my dear, get up; you've no time to spare."

She looked steadily at the girl as she spoke, and put one hand under her shoulder, raising her from the pillow. Annette shrunk from her for a moment with a look partly cowed, partly of avoidance; the next she let her feet down to the floor, and stood up passively, but with her sullenest expression of face.

"Where's Mary?" she said.

"Busy with Mrs. Derinzy. She has been very poorly this afternoon. I'll help you to dress."

She did so silently; and Annette did not speak, but, like a froward child, twitched herself about, and made her task as troublesome as possible—

a manœuvre which Mrs. Stothard quietly nored.

"Where is the odious man?" she asked denly, when she stood dressed for dinner be her toilet-glass, into which she did not look.

"In the drawing-room with the Captain; had better join them."

"No, I won't, not till the bell rings. I'll l out of his way as long as I can. I'm nei Dr. Wainwright's friend nor Dr. Wainwrig patient."

## CHAPTER X.

### MADAME CLARISSE.

Mrs. Stothard had been lucky in getting her daughter into such an unexceptionable establishment as that presided over by Madame Clarisse; at least, so everybody said who spoke to her on the subject, and, as we well know, what everybody says must be right. It does not detract from the truth of the assertion when it is confessed, that very few people knew anything about Mrs. Stothard or her daughter; but the fact remains the same. Madame Clarisse was decidedly the milliner most in vogue during her day with the best —that is to say, the most clothes-wearing and most *cachet*-giving—section of London society; and any young woman who had the luck to learn her experience in such a school, and, after a few years,

the money to set up in business for herself, might consider her fortune as good as made.

No doubt that Madame Clarisse's position was not ungrudgingly yielded up to her, was not achieved, in fact, without an enormous amount of work, and worry, and industry, and self-negation on her part; without a proportionate quantity of jealousy and heart-burning, and envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, on the part of those engaged in the same occupation. Even in the very heyday of her success, when her workwomen were sitting up for forty-eight hours at a stretch (Madame Clarisse lived, it must be recollected, before the passing of any ridiculous Acts of Parliament limiting the hours for women's labour); when the carriages were in double rows before her door; and when, after a Drawing-room or a Court-ball, the columns of the fashionable journals were seething with repetitions of her name, —there were some people who said that they preferred the Misses Block, and roundly asserted that the Misses Block's "cut" was better than Madame Clarisse's. The Misses Block were at-

tenuated old maids, who lived in Edwards-street, Portman-square, in a house which was as old-fashioned as, Madame Clarisse used to declare, were its occupiers, and who had suddenly blossomed from the steady county connection which their mother bequeathed to them into a whirl of fashionable patronage, notwithstanding that they were "*bêtes—Dieu, comme elles sont bêtes!*" according to their lively rival's account.

Madame Clarisse was not *bête*. If she had been, she would never have made the fame or the money which she enjoyed, and which were entirely the result of her own tact and talent and industry. No mother had ever left her a snug business with a county connection. All that she recollected of a mother was a snuffy old person with a silk handkerchief tied round her head, who used to live on a fifth floor in a little street debouching from the Cannebière in Marseilles, and who used to whack her little daughter with a long flat bit of wood when she cried from hunger or other causes. When this mother died, which she was good enough to do

but which was kept in view constantly by the patient herself and Mrs. Stothard, pleaded in support of the impossibility of any change in the mode of life of the Derinzy family, and substantiated by the periodic visits of Dr. Wainwright. Annette was wholly unconscious that while her own illness was the subject of village gossip, comment, and speculation, no one outside had any notion that Mrs. Derinzy was a chronic sufferer, requiring the expensive and solicitous care of a physician of eminence from London, who was well known in Beachborough to be such, and who was generally supposed to come to see the young lady. She would have been greatly angered had she suspected the existence of such an equivoque; for among the strongest of her feelings were a repugnance to knowing herself to be discussed, and an intense dislike to Dr. Wainwright.

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Marseilles has a population of resident English —ship-owners, ship-captains, naval men connected with the great Peninsular and Oriental Company, many of whose vessels ply from that port—and these worthy people have for the most part wives and daughters, whose principal consolation in their banishment from England is that they are enabled to dress themselves in the French fashion and at a much cheaper rate than they could were they at home. There is no gainsaying that the prices charged by the Marseilles milliner, even to the English ladies, was less than those which they would have been liable to in their native land; but these prices, which were willingly paid, were still so much in excess of those charged to the townspeople, that Mademoiselle Clarisse clearly saw that a country which produced people at once so rich and so simple was the place for her future action.

She was a clear-headed young woman, with simple tastes and an innate propensity for saving money; so that when her apprenticeship expired she had a sum laid by—small indeed, but still

something—with which she determined to try her fortune in England. She had picked up a little of the language, and had obtained a few introductions to compatriots living in London; so that when she arrived, she was not wholly friendless or utterly dependent. Mademoiselle Anatole—born in Lyons, but long resident in London—wanted a partner; and after a very sharp wrangle, conducted by the ladies on each side with great skill and diplomacy, a portion of Mademoiselle Clarisse's savings was transferred to her countrywoman, and a limp and ill-printed circular informed Mademoiselle Anatole's patronesses that she had just received into partnership the celebrated Mademoiselle Clarisse from Paris, and that they hoped henceforth, &c.

Mademoiselle Anatole lived on the first floor of an old house in the Bloomsbury district, which had once been a fashionable mansion, but which was now let out in lodgings. Under the French milliner, a German importer of tops and pictures and Bohemian glass had his rooms, and his name, "Korb," shone out truculently from the street-

door jamb, towering above the milliner's more modest announcement of her residence. The entire neighbourhood had a foreign and Bohemian flavour. In an otherwise modest and British-looking house, Malmédie Frères announced in black-and-gold letters, much too slim and upright, that they kept an hotel "à la Boule d'Or." From the open windows in the summer-time poured forth, mixed with clouds of tobacco-smoke, wailings and roarings of the human voice and poundings and grindings of pianos. The artists'-colourmen had the street on their books (keeping it there as little as possible), canvases and millboards were perpetually arriving at one or other of the houses where the windows looking northward were run up into the next floor, and bearded men smoking short pipes pervaded the neighbourhood night and day.

Even the very house in which the milliners lived was not free from the Bohemian taint. On the second floor, immediately above the *magasin des modes*, and immediately under the private rooms of Mesdames Anatole and Clarisse, lived Mr.

Rupert Robinson. Shortly after her arrival Mademoiselle Clarisse met on the stairs several times a middle-sized, middle-aged, jolly-looking gentleman, with bright roguish eyes and a light-brown beard, who bowed as he passed by, and gave her the inside of the staircase with much politeness, and with a "Pardon, ma'amselle," in a very good accent. Asked who this could be, Mademoiselle Anatole responded that it was probably "*ce* Robinson:" asked what was *ce* Robinson, Mademoiselle Anatole farther replied that he was "*feuilletoniste, littérateur — je ne sais quoi!*" And Mademoiselle Anatole was not far out in her guess, to which she had probably been assisted by the constant sight of a grimy-faced printer's-boy peacefully slumbering on a stool specially placed for his accommodation outside Robinson's door. Those were the early days of cheap periodicals, and there were few newspaper-offices or publishers' shops where Mr. Rupert Robinson was unknown or where he was not welcome. He was a bright, genial, jolly fellow, with an inexhaustible stock of animal spirits and

good-humour, with a keen appreciation of the ludicrous, and a singular power of hunting-out and levelling lance at small social shams and inflated humbugs of the day; and though he would not have used a bludgeon, and could not have wielded a cutlass, yet he made excellent practice with his foil, and when he chose, as it happened sometimes, to break the button off and set to work in earnest, his adversary always bore the marks of the bout. Generally, however, he kept clear of anything like heavy work, for which his temperament unsuited him, and confined himself to light literature, at which he was one of the smartest hands of the day; and, in addition to his journalistic and periodical work, he was one of the pillars of the Parthenon Theatre.

Those who only know the Parthenon in its present days—when it occasionally remains shut for months, to open for a few nights with "Herr Eselkopf's celebrated impersonation of the 'Jew whom Shakespeare drew,'" *vide* public advertisement and published criticism from *Berwick-on-*

*Tweed Argus;* when it alternates between opera and burlesque or tragedy and breakdowns, but is always dirty, and dingy, and mouldy-smelling, and bankrupt-looking—can have little idea of what it was in the days of which we are writing, when Mr. and Mrs. Momus were its lessèes, and when there was more fun to be found within its walls than in any other place in London, even of treble its size. The chiefs of that merry company are both dead; the belles whose bright eyes enthralled us then are portly matrons now, renewing their former beauty in their daughters; the walking-gentlemen have walked off entirely or lapsed into heavy fathers; and the authors, who were constantly lounging in the greenroom, and convulsing actors and actresses with their audacious chaff, are some dead, and all who are left sobered and steadied and aged. But all were young, and jolly, and witty, and daring in those days; and foremost amongst them was Mr. Rupert Robinson, who was then just beginning to write burlesques in a style which his successors have spoiled and written out, and was dramatising popular nursery

stories, and filling them with the jokes, allusions, and parodies of the day.

Although Mr. Rupert Robinson had been for some time domiciled under the same roof as Mademoiselle Anatole, he had made no attempt to cultivate the acquaintance of that lady, who was in truth a very long, very thin, very flat, very melancholy person, who had not merely *les larmes dans sa voix*, but seemed to be thoroughly saturated with misery. But soon after Mademoiselle Clarisse was added to the firm, the "littery gent," as Mrs. Mogg the landlady was accustomed to call her second-floor lodger, contrived to get up a bowing acquaintance, which soon ripened into speaking, and afterwards into much greater intimacy. Mademoiselle Anatole at first disapproved of the *camaraderie* thus established; but she was mollified by the judicious presentation of unlimited orders for the theatres and the Opera, and by other kindness which had more satisfactory and more enduring results; for Mr. Rupert Robinson, being of a convivial nature, was in the habit of frequently giving what he called

"jolly little suppers" to certain select ladies of the *corps de ballet* of the Parthenon; cheery little meals, where the male portion of the company was contributed by the Household Brigade, the Legislature, the Bar, and the Press, and where the comestibles were the succulent oyster opened in the room and eaten fresh from the operating knife, the creamy lobster, and hot potato handed from the block-tin repository presided over by a peripatetic provider known to the guests as "Tatur Khan." In his early youth Rupert had been a medical student at the Hôtel Dieu in Paris, and he strove, not unsuccessfully, to imbue these little parties with a spirit of the *vie de Bohème* which rules the denizens of the Latin Quarter. The viands were very good and very cheap, and though there was plenty of fun and laughter, there was no license.

Soon after the establishment of his acquaintance with Clarisse, Rupert invited her and her partner to one of these banquets, and she soon became popular with the set who were admitted to them. Mademoiselle Anatole they did not

think much of; indeed, Miss Bella Montmorency, one of the four leading *coryphées* who at that time were creating such a sensation in the ballet of *Mustapha* at the T.R.D.L., said all the use that that thin Frenchwoman could be made of was to replace the skeleton, a relic of Rupert's old surgical life, which he sometimes brought out of its box and seated at the table, crowned with flowers. But with Clarisse they were very different. She was bright and cheery, sang a pretty little song, and laughed a merry little ringing laugh at all the jokes, whether she understood them or not; and the ballet-girls liked her very much, and invited her to come and see them, and tried to help her in the world. They could not do much in that way themselves, for they made their own dresses of course, and when they had a present of a black-silk gown or a shawl, had no chance of recommending any particular vendor; but when they saw that the Frenchwomen were really excellent in their business, they spoke about them in the theatre so loudly, that the rumours of their proficiency reached the ears of Mrs. Lan-

nigan and Miss Calverley, the two "leading ladies" of the theatre, and incited their curiosity. The crimson-slashed jackets and the lovely diaphanous nether garments, the Polish lancer-caps and the red boots with brass heels, which these ladies wore in the burlesques, were provided by the management and prepared by Miss Hirst the wardrobe woman, a crushed creature with a pock-marked face and a wall eye, who always had the bosom of her gown studded with pins, and her hair streaked with fluffy ends of thread. But when phases of modern life were to be represented, the ladies chose to find their own dresses; and hearing of the excellent "cut" and "fit" of Mademoiselles Anatole and Clarisse, were persuaded to give those young women a trial. The result was favourable, recommendation followed on recommendation, and the firm had as much work as it could possibly get through.

It was about this period of her life that Mademoiselle Clarisse, in her visits to the theatre, made the acquaintance of M. Pierre. It was not to be doubted that M. Pierre, as well as Made-

moiselles Anatole and Clarisse, was in possession of a legitimate surname in addition to the *nom de baptême* by which he was commonly known; but, following the custom of those of his class, he had suffered it to lapse on coming to England, and though known as "ce cher Lélong" by his compatriots, called himself to his customers M. Pierre, and was so called by them. M. Pierre was a *coiffeur* by profession—unfortunately, as he thought; for he lived at a time when that profession was rather at a discount. In his early youth, when the great ladies wore their own hair dressed in the most elaborate fashion, the *coiffeur* was a necessary adjunct to every well-regulated establishment. Had he lived until now, when the great ladies wear other persons' hair dressed in the most preposterous manner, he would have found plenty to do, and would probably have invented various washes, which would have ruined the health of thousands of silly women and made the fortune of their concocter. But when M. Pierre was in the prime of his life, elaborate hair-dressing went out of fashion, and the simplicity

of knots, bands, and ringlets, which could be intrusted to the maid or even executed by the fair fingers of the wearer, came in its stead. This was an awful blow to M. Pierre, whose experience was thus restricted to members of the theatrical profession, or to the occasional preparation of wigs and headdresses for a fancy-ball; but he had saved a little money, and being a long-headed calculating man, he arranged to invest and re-invest it to great advantage. At the time that he was introduced to Mademoiselle Clarisse he was an elderly man, but he had lost none of his shrewdness and *savoir faire*. He saw at a glance that his countrywoman was not merely perfect mistress of her art, but generally a clever woman of the world; and after a little time he proposed to her that they should club their means and hunt the rich English in couples. He pointed out to her that his connection formerly lay among the very highest and best classes, many of whom recollected him, and would be glad to give any one a turn on his recommendation; that he, as a man, had a much greater chance of buying

merchandise good and cheap than any woman; finally, that he had capital, without which she could never do anything great, which he would put into the business.

Mademoiselle Clarisse took a week to think over all that Pierre had said to her before coming to any decision. Her ambition had increased with her success, and she had long since ceased to think very highly of the patronage of the theatrical ladies, to obtain which at one time she would have made any sacrifice. For some time she had been in business on her own account; Mademoiselle Anatole, so soon as she realised a sufficiency, having retired to Lyons, there to weep and grizzle and sniff, and make herself as uncomfortable and unpleasant-looking as the vast majority of French old maids. And Clarisse was fully aware of M. Pierre's talent and believed in his fortune; and verging towards middle age, and having lost sight of Rupert Robinson, and others for whom she had had her *caprices* after him, and having lost her zest for rollicking suppers and fun of that kind, thought she could not do

better than settle herself in life; and accordingly accepted M. Pierre's proposal.

She soon found she had done rightly. Many of her husband's old patronesses consented to give her a trial for his sake, and were so pleased, that they recommended her to all their friends. The establishment in George-street was then first opened, and M. Pierre not only did all he promised, but a great deal more. For, being always a man of great taste, he turned his attention to the devising of special articles of millinery, then employed his manual dexterity in carrying out his ideas; and not suffering in any way from a sense of the ridiculous, he might be seen hour after hour in his sanctum, with his glasses on his nose and an embroidered skull-cap on his head, singing away some pastoral *chanson* or drinking couplet, while his nimble fingers were busily engaged in stitching at a novel kind of headdress or in sketching out a design for an artistic bonnet. He was proud of his wife's appearance and pleased with her industry and success, and he enjoyed his married life very much

for a couple of years, making a point of going to St. James's-street on Drawing-room days, and to the Opera on great nights, to admire the results of his handiwork, but otherwise living very domestically and quietly; and then he died, leaving all his worldly possessions to his widow.

The success which had attended Madame Clarisse during her husband's lifetime continued after his death, and there was scarcely a house in the millinery business holding a higher reputation than hers. It was this reputation which induced Mrs. Stothard, ordinarily so quiet and self-contained, to make a great effort to get her daughter engaged as a member of Madame Clarisse's staff. Many young women of Daisy's position in life would have eagerly accepted such a chance; "From Madame Clarisse's," figuring on a brass door-plate in the future, being an excellent recommendation and an almost certain augury of success. The Frenchwoman was perfectly cognisant of this, and required a large premium with her apprentices. That once paid, the girls were turned into the work-room and left to "take it

out" as best they might; unless, indeed, one of them showed exceptional talent and skill—qualities which were immediately recognised by their employer.

Daisy's promotion had, however, not been due to her possession of either of these qualities. She had one, a much rarer, which influenced her removal from the work-room to the show-room, and which led Madame Clarisse and all her customers to take notice of the girl—and that was the exceptional style of her beauty. Ladies, young and old, would call Madame to them, and in under-tones ask her who was the "young person" with that wonderful complexion and that excellent manner. Was she not some one who —they meant to say—not born in that class of life, don't you know; so very bred-looking and *distinguée*, and that sort of thing? Some women would have been jealous of such compliments paid to their assistant, but Madame was far above anything of that kind. She used to bow and to invent any little nonsense as it occurred to her at the moment, enough to satisfy the querists with-

out leading them to pursue their inquiries, and then would dismiss the subject from her thoughts. The girl was *assez gentille*, neat, and even elegant in her appearance, and of good address; looked well in the street, wore pretty gloves, Madame had noticed, in contradistinction to most Anglaises—"*qui sont ordinairement gantées comme les chats bottés*," as she would say with a shrug of horror—and walked well—in Madame's mind another unusual accomplishment in an Englishwoman. Altogether she was a credit to the establishment; and Madame began to take a little more notice of her, talk more confidentially of business matters to her, and leave her in charge of affairs when pleasure engagements, of which she had a great many, summoned her away. Under these different circumstances the girl became a different being in her employer's eyes. Hitherto Madame Clarisse had only seen her as a quiet impassive young woman doing her duty in the show-room; but when she came to know her, and to see how every feeling was reflected in her face—how the gray eyes could flash and

the colour would rush into the pale cheek, heightened in its brilliancy by the creamy whiteness surrounding it—she allowed to herself that "Fanfan," as she now called her, was lovely indeed.

And then Madame Clarisse began to have new notions about Fanfan. The French milliner was not an exceptionally good woman, nor, indeed, ever thought of arrogating to herself the title. In the days of her youth she had not permitted any straitlaced notions of morality to interfere with her pleasures; and in her comfortable middle age she never neglected an opportunity of gratifying the two passions by which she was most swayed — money-making and good living. She cared very little as to what her young women might do during the few spare hours of their leisure; but it was a necessity of her business, that the assistants in the show-room should be presentable persons and of a certain staid demeanour. Fanfan's manners were admirably suited for her place—cold, respectful, and intelligent; but when Madame had discovered the existence of the volcano beneath the icy exterior, had

learned, as she did quietly and dexterously, that, with all the good schooling she had gone through, and the restraint which she had brought to bear upon herself, the girl was full of feeling and passion and that there was "a great deal of human nature" in her, she took a special and peculiar interest in Fanfan's future.

"To make herself a *modiste* here in London without money is impossible," she mused. "To set up in Brighton or Tonbridge, to marry an *épicier* or an *employé*—ah, my faith, she is too good for that! Is it that Madame Lobbia, that little dame, *mince*, and like to a white rabbit, who flies to and from Saint Jean's Woot at the great trot with her beautiful horses and wears diamonds in full day; is it that Mdlle. Victorine, *feu ecuyère* at Franconi's, who leads Milor Milliken such a dance, throws his money to the winds, and laughs to his nose; is it that they are to be mentioned with Fanfan? And there are other Jews, merchants of diamonds, than M. Lobbia, and other milors as rich and as silly as Milor Milliken. Forward, my Fanfan! why this dull life to you?

For me, do you ask, why I give myself so much trouble? Hold, I know nothing! In watching the progress of others one renews one's own youth, and to *exploiter* so much grace and beauty would be interesting and might be remunerative. *Et, du reste*—" and Madame Clarisse paused for a moment, reflecting; then shrugged her shoulders slightly, and said, "*du reste, à la guerre comme à la guerre!*"

But whatever Madame's notions on the subject might have been, she kept them strictly to herself, never making any difference in her manner towards Daisy, save, perhaps, in being a little kinder and showing a little increased confidence in her. It was not until the evening after the day on which Fanny Stothard had written to her mother that Madame made any regular approach to familiarity with her assistant. They had had a long and busy and tiring day, for the end of the season was coming on, as it always does, with a rush, and people had neglected ordering their autumn clothes, as they always do, until the last, and the show-rooms had been crammed for

six hours with an impatient crowd, every component member of which desired to be served at once. Madame had given up any *réunions* for that evening and had taken her fair share of the work and supervised everything, remaining in the show-room until all the girls except Daisy had gone. Then she walked up to Daisy, and put one hand on the girl's shoulder, tapping her cheek with the other, and saying,

"*Enfin,* Mademoiselle Fanfan, this dreadful day has come to an end at last. You look worn and fatigued, my child. It's lucky that the end of the season is close at hand, or you would what you call 'knock-up' without fail."

"O, I shall do very well, Madame, thank you," replied Daisy, a little coldly; "a night's rest will quite set me up again."

"O, but you must have something before your night's rest, Fanfan. You are *triste* and tired; I see it in your eyes. You want a—*tiens!* what is it that little *farceur*, the advocate Chose, calls it?—a peg. Ha, ha, that is it! You want a sherry peg or a glass of champagne. We will

go up to my room, and have some Lyons *saucisson* and some champagne."

At any other time Daisy would have declined this invitation; but partly because she really felt low and hipped and overwrought, and imagined that the wine would restore her, partly because she was afraid of appearing ungracious to her employer, whose increased kindness to her of late she had noticed, she now said she should be delighted, and followed Madame up the stairs.

Such a cosy little sitting-room was Madame's —low-ceilinged and odd-shaped, like an ordinary *entresol* carried up a story; with French furniture in red velvet, with the walls covered with engravings and nicknacks and Danton's statuettes, and the tables littered "with scrofulous French novels" in their yellow-paper covers. The room was lit by one large window and a half, the other half giving light to Madame's bedroom, which led out by a door, through which, when open, as it usually was, glimpses could be obtained of the end of a brass bedstead apparently dressed-up in blue muslin. There was a cloth on the table,

and Madame bustled about, and, assisted by her little French maid — the page-boy retired home after customers' hours—soon produced some sausage and the remains of a Strasbourg pie, bread, butter, and *fromage de Brie*, and from the cellar (which was a cupboard on the landing with a patent lock, where Madame kept a small stock of remarkably good wine) a bottle of champagne.

Daisy could not eat very much, she was over-tired for that; but the wine did her good, and she talked much more freely than was her wont.

Madame Clarisse was delighted with her; a certain bitterness in the girl's tone being specially appreciated by the Frenchwoman. After some little talk she said to her,

"You still live in the same apartment, Fanfan?"

"Yes, Madame—in the same garret."

"Garret!" echoed Madame Clarisse. "*Eh bien*, what does it matter? Garret or palace, it makes little difference when one is young.

'Bravant le monde, et les sots et les sages,
Sans avenir, riche de mon printemps,
Leste et joyeux je montais six étages—
Dans un grenier qu'on est bien a vingt ans.'"

And as she trolled out the verse in a rich voice, Madame's eyes looked very wicked, and she chinked her glass against her companion's.

"Perhaps it is because I only live on the third story—though there's nothing above it—but I certainly never feel *leste* or *joyeuse*," said the girl.

"No?" said Madame interrogatively. "That's a sad thing to say. And yet you have youth and beauty, Fanfan."

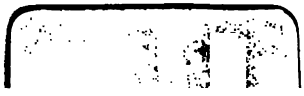
"Youth and beauty!" cried the girl. "If I have them, what good are they to me? Can they drag me out of this life of slavery, take me from that wretched garret, give me gowns, and jewels, and horses, and carriages, and a position in life?"

Daisy was full of excitement; the tones of her voice were thrilling, her eyes sparkled, and her cheeks were flushed. Madame Clarisse eyed her curiously.

"Yes," she said, after a minute's pause; "they can do all this, and"—taking Daisy's hand—"some day, Fanfan, perhaps they may."

"Perhaps they may," said Daisy.

She was thinking of the chance of her marrying Paul Derinzy, whom she knew as Mr. Douglas. But Madame Clarisse did not know Mr. Derinzy, so she was not thinking of Daisy's marrying him—or anybody else, as it happened.

END OF VOL. I.

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